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A  
CRITICAL HISTORY  
OF  
RATIONALISM IN GERMANY.



A  
CRITICAL HISTORY  
OF  
RATIONALISM IN GERMANY,

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE PRESENT TIME.

By AMAND SAINTES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF THE FRENCH ORIGINAL.

EDITED BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE PEOPLE’S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE.”

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“The last step of Reason is to know that there is an infinitude of things which surpass it. If it cannot reach this point, Reason is very weak. We ought to know where to doubt, where to be confident, where to submit. He who does not act thus, knows not the true character of Reason.”—*Pensées de Pascal*.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THIS History of German Rationalism, which has received the sanction and honour of having been translated into the language of the country to which it chiefly relates,\* is presented to the English reader, as the only systematic and consecutive account there is of one of the greatest movements through which the human mind has passed. The work contains many views and statements in which the Editor does not concur, but it has been selected for the sake, not of its opinions, but its narratives. Some of those narratives stop short of the present hour. Information of a later date is occasionally supplied in notes. A brief Appendix gives some account of popular movements—those of the *Lichtfreunde* (Friends of Light) and Ronge—which are among the more marked results produced by Rationalism in the great mass of society. Future historians will probably find reason to state that to the combined influence of Rationalism and Pantheistic Philosophy, which has gone far to blight and uproot the positive religious convictions of France as well as Ger-

\* *Kritische Geschichte des Rationalism in Deutschland* herausgeg. von C. G. Ficker. Leipzig, 1847.

many, was in the main to be ascribed the socially and politically destructive storm which has lately swept over the Continent, and which to the Editor wears the appearance of being the precursor of organic changes no less widely spread than deep and lasting.

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## BOOK I.

STATE OF THE CHURCH AND OF THEOLOGY IN  
GERMANY ANTERIOR TO RATIONALISM.



# HISTORY OF RATIONALISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### RATIONALISM DESCRIBED.

IT is my intention to attempt to set forth the origin, development and consequences of that phase of religious opinion which has arisen in Germany under the name of *Rationalism*; and which, while it has opposed a strong barrier to the progress of French Deism and English Naturalism, has nevertheless inflicted a blow on the Christian faith, from which it will not soon recover. The name of Rationalists, adopted by those members of the Christian community who have thrown off the yoke of the ancient faith, may be easily misunderstood. I myself, at first, imagined that it signified the wise and constant exercise of reason on religious subjects; but in studying the matter historically, I soon found that it is the same with this word, as with many others, which, having lost their original meaning, now express an idea directly contrary to that which their etymology seems to indicate. It is indisputably true that God, in granting reason to man, has not forbidden its exercise. As religion, the queen of all minds, possesses over them indestructible rights, so also human reason has rights which cannot be disputed; and as Kant has justly said, "The faith which should oppose itself to reason could not long exist." Taking this view, we form an idea of Rationalism similar to that conceived by the great Leibnitz; which, with our present ideas of truth, we cannot regard as unreasonable. But this right of the human reason to examine and discuss, differs widely from its self-constitution as supreme judge in subjects of religion, and the wish to submit to its own tribunal, which it declares infallible, God and conscience. This, however, has been the case in modern times, when philosophy has openly avowed itself the enemy of Christianity, and when those who were terrified by its rash demands have sought to confound them by the devices of Rationalism, thus hastening the ruin of the edifice which they aspired to restore. If there is a country in Europe where

thought is not inactive, and where the claims of human reason in religion have been strongly urged, that country is doubtless Germany; where, without neglecting any of the sciences which have a more immediate bearing on actual life, the mind delights in launching forth into the sphere of speculation, and in entertaining on all subjects the most audacious and extravagant opinions. This fact must long prevent Germany from having a philosophy, I had almost said a Christianity, of her own, since Christian creeds and systems must contain something of the Christian spirit, though they do not wholly constitute it. It is true that the Rationalism whose history I am attempting to write, seems to have become the national religion of this interesting country; since we find it everywhere and under all forms; and since its influence is felt even by those who appear to be its most determined enemies; but as it is without any fixed principles, and is as foreign to true Christianity as to true philosophy; as, moreover, it has no banner, and cannot live in the midst of a people who would repudiate it, did they thoroughly understand it; as, I say, it can only exist under the shadow of those altars which it no longer venerates, it must follow, that Rationalism can no more than any other system of philosophy or religion, claim the right of ruling in the land of Germany. But Rationalism may with justice claim the glory of numbering among its advocates men of that genius which party-spirit alone would venture to dispute; writers who have succeeded in raising theology and philosophy from the sort of obscurity (shall I say contempt?) into which they had fallen in the lapse of time; who have enlarged their foundations, multiplied their ramifications, and shown what rich and abundant fruits they might bear, did those who cultivate them know how to fulfil the requirements of piety and wisdom. These two sciences, indeed, are connected with the most noble instincts of the mind and heart, and cannot develop themselves in all their splendour before ignorance or vice. But Rationalism vainly attempts to satisfy the moral wants of human society; its error lies in thinking that, in the domain of science, vast erudition can supply the place of true genius; in believing that in the domain of religion, sentiment alone can effectually replace the pious confidence of the Christian in the promises of the Gospel. However, Rationalism, although it is not yet a century old in Germany, can claim a great number of writers who have adopted its principles and applied them in all departments of theology. It will be difficult for me to confine within strict and reasonable limits my account, however concise, of the different phases through which this system of religion has passed, from the time when its germ was first laid in the constitu-

tion of the church as established by Luther, up to its highest expression in the words of the writer who has openly advised all the ministers of religion who entertain the same opinions as himself, to close the doors of the temple if they are not willing to enthrone philosophy therein (Strauss, *Leben Jesu*). The materials for the history which I am about to write are the more numerous, since Rationalism, far from quitting Germany, as is sometimes asserted, when the hopes of the heart or systematic illusions are mistaken for realities, and far from being narrowed in its influence in that country, appears to have become still more firmly established, and to be the ruling system in religious affairs, though not yet possessing the supreme authority in church government.

We should be strangely deceived, if we mistook the new expositions of the Rationalistic system for an abandonment of it. Certainly it will be readily admitted that the days of Doctor Paulus are passed, and that the German youth who wish to study theology, seek no longer, as they did thirty years ago, for the sources of Christianity in the scriptural commentaries of that hermit professor; it must also be added, that the stars of Gesenius, of Wegscheider, and of Röhr, have lost much of their lustre. Nevertheless the influence of these men is still great in Germany.\* To the same party belong Schultz, at Breslau; Gieseler, at Göttingen; Ullmann, at Heidelberg; Bretschneider, at Gotha; de Wette,† at Basle; Hase, at Jena; Wiener, at Leipzig; and a crowd of others: and notwithstanding some obscurity in the expression of their opinions, such writers ought to have considerable weight with us in forming an appreciation of their system. When I have recorded the nature of their labours, I think it will be evident that the church of Christ contains in its own bosom an adversary the more to be dreaded, from the fact that, like a child who has been substituted for the real heir of a family, it believes itself to be true Christianity, and, as such, claims all its rights.

Rationalism must not, therefore, be understood to signify the use which theologians have made of reason in matters of belief. Did the reader thus interpret it, he would greatly mistake our aim; he would be deceived in the nature of the labours which it is our wish to describe, and which we respect, even in their errors, so long as we believe them sincere; he would, in fact, attribute to the author of this history intentions which he could not entertain, and religious opinions

\* Röhr's *Discourse on the Reformation* (*Reformationspredigt*), considered in a rationalistic light, delivered in 1839, met with almost unparalleled success. That of Reinhard, in 1800, is the only one which can be compared to it.

† De Wette has just died.—E.



which his respect for human reason would compel him to disavow. The apostles of the Gospel continually appeal to the reason of their hearers. Christ himself urges \* the increasing exercise of the *eye of the soul*, as he calls the conscience (Matt. vi. 23), in judging of the truth which he announces, since a good conscience is always better disposed to rise to the knowledge of the truth, while one heavy laden and harrassed is exceedingly prone to receive dogmas without properly understanding their import; because it feels the truth of them through the consolations which they offer. In no age of Christianity has there arisen a serious discussion on this subject, though the extravagant pretensions of Rationalism have provoked in its adversaries some exaggerations which can never prevail over the ancient Christian system. That system by no means forbade the exercise of human intelligence in religious matters, though, not considering it as paramount, it employed, as a last means of judging of revelation, a superior and only infallible reason; the divine reason, the doctrinal expression of which is found in the books which all Christians have hitherto considered divine; and whose authenticity and truth cannot be disputed without overturning that Christianity which has been professed during eighteen centuries.

But modern Rationalism has done more than assert the right of exercising reason; it has pretended that to this faculty alone belongs the privilege of deciding on man's religious faith and his moral duty, and that if from long custom any respect is still due to revelation, it should only receive it when it is not opposed to the judgments of reason. But if this reason were sufficient for mankind, why should divine revelation be in any case opposed to it?

Rationalism, which, unlike Naturalism and Deism, declares itself the friend of revelation, cannot answer this question consistently, and is in reality obliged to deny revelation in explaining it in its own peculiar way, and in finding it only in the manifestations of God's will in nature and in the providential progress of history. Dr. Röhr in his work on this subject, which has become classical, says, in speaking of Reinhard, that he had completely defined the two systems in his book entitled *Confessions (Geständnisse)*. Now Reinhard says, that on subjects of religious belief, the *reason alone* is to decide on the doctrines of faith, and that the Scriptures are to be considered only as a book of human origin.

\* It would be useless to quote here those passages of Scripture which affirm this indisputable fact. We may say that there is nothing more *rational* than the language of Jesus in his parables and metaphors, or the dialectic exhortations of the apostles, which appeal as much to the reason as to the conscience of the hearers.



Supernaturalism or Orthodoxy, on the contrary, receives the revelation made in the Scriptures as a direct and immediate communication from the Deity to man.\* Hence we may see that Supernaturalism, as opposed to Rationalism, does not consist in the admission of all the details of a religious system which have been changed in the course of cen-

\* *Briefe über Rationalismus*, p. 14-16.—*The Examinerium in Matters of Opinion for the Evangelical Churches* (Quedlinburg, 1830. p. 96, 97), says, "By Supernaturalism must be understood that process of thought by which we arrive at a belief in a supernatural and immediate revelation, which is superior to reason, and to which reason should submit." It would, perhaps, have been more exact had the author been content to designate revelation as the guide of reason. However that may be, this *Examinerium*, drawn up by a Rationalist, afterwards defines Rationalism as that way of thinking which receives only a *mediate* revelation of which reason is the judge, and which cannot contain anything contrary to reason, nor anything *superior to it*. (Here it passes the limits of simple, good sense.) Hahn defines Rationalism as "that mode of thought by which the human reason is considered as the only source and the only judge of all kinds of knowledge. Consequently, all revelation is only supernatural in form; it is in reality natural, and if it have any pretensions to truth should be limited by reason or natural religion." See Hahn, *De Rationalismi indole*, Leipzig, 1827. According to Bretschneider, it is also that mode of thought by which there is no faith in an immediate revelation, but only in the truth of a philosophical religion. See his *Systematic Development*, &c. (*Systematische Entwicklung*), 3rd edition, p. 198; and the 4th edition of his *Dogmatik*, vol. i. pp. 14, 71, 80. If the difference between this system and serious Naturalism be not yet sufficiently clear, let us consult Wegscheider. He will answer in these words,—“Rationalistæ a Naturalistis eo potissimum recedunt quod illi divinam *aliquam* revelationem vere admittunt, eique progressus mentis humanæ in religione colenda lubenter acceptos ferunt, vindicata quidem rationis facultate hanc revelationem judicandi et ad usum transferendi, &c.” These two paragraphs, 11 and 12, of the chapter *De Religione*, of Wegscheider (see *Institutiones Theologicae*, 8th edit. Lipsiæ, 1844. p. 47, seq.), must be read in order thoroughly to convince us of the audacity of Rationalism in exalting human reason and declaring it sufficient for all the necessities of life. The last edition of this work, which I have before me (the 7th), printed at Halle in 1833, contains, moreover, a rich literature, bearing witness in every respect to the definition of Rationalism which we have given. Since the publication of this book, Dr. Paniel, a writer of indisputable talent, but who has not always been strictly impartial, as is shown in his *History of Christian Eloquence* (*Pragmatische Geschichte der Christlichen Beredsamkeit und der Homiletik*, Leipz. 1839-41), where he places so low the supernaturalist preachers, while he shows such liberality towards those of the opposite party, has commenced a *monthly review* (*Bremisches Magazin für evangelische Wahrheit*), designed ostensibly to oppose *modern pietism*, but in reality to substitute Rationalism for the ancient reformed religion, which has always had zealous supporters in Bremen. I make this remark only on account of Dr. Paniel's inconsistency: he declares, in a very long introductory article, that his only wish is to modify the too great severity of the ancient dogmas; but after making many excellent observations on human reason, which might be made by any supernaturalist who had not altogether abandoned the exercise of his faculties, he defines Ra-

turies ; there are, on the contrary, many true Christians who are not agreed on all these details. But all, on pain of being considered renegades from Christianity, unite in believing,—first, in the truth of a divine revelation, such as has always been received prior to the eighteenth century in all the churches of Christianity, and that this revelation or expression of the Divine will is contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments ; secondly, that it is not sufficient to consider the Bible, as Rationalism does, merely as a book providentially preserved, as God preserves in the world all the monuments which he considers necessary for the good of the human race, nor as a work where we find only that which conforms to the known laws of human reason. Hence we see again that Rationalism is not a systematic incredulity as to religious truths ; far from being so, it makes among other pretensions that of developing the religious feelings in the highest degree, and there is in the writings of its most distinguished disciples something which arouses even the most lethargic minds. But it is far from attaining its end ; for although it constitutes itself the supreme judge of Christianity, it does not in reality adopt one of the living doctrines of that religion which alone have power over the moral nature of man ; its influence, if we observe it closely, extends only over his feelings ; it fails to penetrate into the depths of his being ; and can we forget that one of its essential characteristics is to wage deadly war against the supernatural element which abounds in the Bible, and which Rationalism would wholly eradicate ? An enlightened Supernaturalist will then very willingly confess that Naturalism may be professed with a semblance of reason and in good faith, and he can even consider it as a system of philosophy, wherein are to be found fewer philosophical elements than in any other ; but simple good sense forbids him to imagine it possible to profess modern Rationalism and at the same time to retain the name of a Christian.

tionalism in such a manner as to destroy the effect of his preliminary remarks. “ Christianity,” says he, “ would *probably* have lost its sanctifying power if God had not protected the principal points of his teachings by the (material) preservation of the New Testament, which we ought to respect as the work of Divine providence, of the mission of Christ and of his teachings (not a word of the inspiration of the sacred books ! )—whence it follows that the *fundamental principle of Protestantism is that of Rationalism*, viz., that each has the right to seek out to perfection the true sense of Scripture (*den wahren Sinn der Schrift immer vollkommener erforschen*). We shall presently see that those who begin with these principles are conducted by them further than perhaps they at first intended to go (*Bremische Magazin*, 254-55, 1st part). Is it a necessary consequence of the unreasonable exaggeration of M. Krummacker that a periodical should be established from which evangelical Christianity alone will have to suffer ?

It will now be seen, that when I speak of the origin of Rationalism in Germany I am not ignorant that true Rationalists have appeared in all times and in all religions. Their task has been to subject to the judgment of reason, things opposed to it, not things superior to it; and those things are superior to it which cannot be shown to be at direct variance with its laws. If any one can be taxed with Rationalism before the eighteenth century, it is assuredly the grave, the pious, and the wise Spinoza; but as his theological influence did not produce immediate results, we ought to consider as the founder of this system, him who consecrated his whole life to the propagation of its principles; and who saw a crowd of disciples, though not following precisely in his steps, yet pursuing the same direction, or only wandering from it to enter on paths still more fatal.

Thus, before tracing the successive transformations of Rationalism, it was necessary clearly to define its nature; and we have seen that it is the persuasion that man possesses in himself all the powers sufficient to raise him to the understanding and practice of the Christian religion. Rationalism treats the revelation which considers these powers insufficient, as a mere vassal; and in so doing, does it not assume hostility towards it?

If Rationalism should deny this charge, I will cast no suspicions on its good faith; but may I not be permitted to show its inconsistency and false logic, from which we should wish to see it free? It is true that all the opinions to which a more or less modified Rationalism has given rise during the last fifty years, are not based on the literal meaning of this definition, since the human faculties are regarded in a different light by each of its authors; but all the opinions unite in changing the ancient ideas of revelation and inspiration, without which doctrines have no authority, and in deifying human reason by making it the supreme judge of religious faith and practice. If we do not take care to establish this radical and essential difference between the two systems, we shall be easily mistaken as to their mutual bearing, and we shall be guilty of injustice in our judgments, even with the best intentions. A proof of this is found in the narrow way of thinking of some supernaturalist theologians and men of the world, whose conduct affords so shocking a contrast to the generous sentiments displayed by many of the Rationalists, that our sympathies are willingly enlisted on the side of the latter; and we shall not perceive that in adopting their opinions it is necessary to abandon those Christian principles which, wisely understood and applied, are also an inexhaustible source of generous thoughts, of noble sentiments, and, above all, of peace for the human mind.

It is by the development of the principles which the different parties of Rationalism have uttered and supported with warmth, that we shall be better able to appreciate it. Setting out, therefore, from its first essays, by Ernesti and Semler, I shall endeavour to describe the different transformations which it has undergone before arriving at the state in which we now see it,—a state of utter impotence for the realisation of that which has ever been the object of its hopes. If, indeed, Rationalism does prevail over the greater part of Germany, it is only in a negative manner. All who are opposed to the moral law of the Gospel gladly borrow its cloak in order to obtain the right of choosing among their duties that which is most in accordance with their wishes, and of rejecting that which is at variance with their inclinations. But the foundation of something useful, the indication of consolation to suffering humanity, the arousing of the conscience and the work of improvement in the vast domain of morality,—all these most important questions seem altogether foreign to it. We might say that it can only reveal its existence, and show the vast extent of its kingdom by its numerous negations. There is no life in it, and can it communicate to others what it does not itself possess? But we will not anticipate facts: we must, on the contrary, go back to the sixteenth century, and there inquire into the principles of the religious reformation which that age witnessed.\*

\* On the subject treated of in this chapter, and on the several topics of theology and religion, the reader will find his account in consulting *Systematische Entwicklung aller in der Dogmatik vorkommenden Begriffe, nebst der Literatur*, von C. G. Bretschneider, 4th edit. Leipzig, 1841. Historical and critical notices of Rationalism may also be found in Tholuck's *Vermischte Schriften*, vol. i. Essay 1st; in *German Literature*, by Wolfgang Menzel, translated by Gordon, vol. i. p. 106, seq.; and in *German Protestantism, and the Right of Private Judgment*, by E. H. Dewar, M.A. Oxford, 1844. Some valuable additions may be found in notes and excursus appended to the German translation of the work now before the reader, by C. G. Ficker. Leipzig, 1847.—E.

For notes having an E. at the end, the Editor is answerable. The other notes are by the author.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

It has often been said that the principles of Rationalism actuated Luther and his fellow-labourers in the work of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and enabled them to excite the religious world of Germany against the authority of Roman Catholicism ; but though it may be true, as a general statement, that the principles of Protestantism differ very little from those of Rationalism, since free inquiry is their common practical expression, we should still be guilty of great injustice in attributing to these reformers, intentions which they never entertained ; and it is not difficult to imagine that Luther, as well as Melancthon himself, whose dogmatic Supernaturalism is so well known, would be terrified by a supposition so contrary to their faith and their method of arriving at that faith. If the impartial historian may with some justice reproach them with inconsistency, with false logic, and even with contradictions in the immense work which they undertook for the preservation of Gospel truths, then covered by a thick layer of superstition, he can neither blame them nor give them credit for results which are in such direct opposition to their teachings. The reformers believed that the Christian religion does not profess to be a philosophical science that can be exclusively derived from human reason, but that it is to be received as a particular revelation, having for its foundation, first, the word of Jesus, which is without appeal, Jesus being in their eyes *God made manifest in the flesh* ; secondly, the divine inspiration of the apostles ; and finally, the authority of the writings which contain the teachings of Jesus and his immediate disciples. It was this last authority which they substituted for that of the church from which they had separated, being persuaded that it was nearer infallibility, and therefore more worthy of respect. The reformers were equally persuaded that Christianity contains nothing opposed to the light of a healthy reason, but they did not deceive themselves as to its authority both to enlighten our intelligence and to move our will. They also followed the example of the ancient doctors of the church in commencing all their new articles with these words—*We*



*believe* ; which rather express confidence in the word of a master than the adhesion of the mind to a demonstrated truth. Their great aim above all was to cleanse the Christian church from those abuses against which pious minds had vainly exclaimed for many centuries, and to restore those doctrines which they maintained to have been taught by the apostles in place of those professed by the theologians of their times. It was with these ideas that the Reformation was accomplished in the sixteenth century, when the circumstance of indulgences gave occasion for its commencement.\*

Another remark may be made on the line of conduct pursued by the old reformers, viz., that if their protestations were sometimes directed against dogmas which they did not understand,—such, for example, as the constant connexion of grace with the free will of man, or, in other words, the incessant action of the Creator on his creatures ; and above all, if they bore too often the character of folly and passion,—they were, however, far from having only a negative side. The reformers were not content with rejecting what they believed to be only the production of error and superstition ; they erected formulary against formulary, they opposed dogma to dogma, discipline to discipline ; in a word, they sought to establish a church which should, like the ancient one, possess a code of laws. But they did not agree on an essential point, viz., the institution to be charged with the execution of these laws. So that with this new establishment, each could appeal from the confessions of faith to the Bible, and from the Bible to other doctrinal books, without any authority having the power of enlightening him as to errors, or rescuing him from his doubts. When the time arrives to

\* “To give an impulse to the Gospel was the ultimate aim of the Reformers.” (J. G. Kleuker, *über den alt. und neuen Protestantismus*, Altenb. 1823.) See also the *History of Germany at the Time of the Reformation* (*Geschichte Deutschlands zur zeit der Reformation*), by L. Ranke. 3 vols. Berlin.

It is to be presumed that those persons who have shown so much ardour in France in traducing the *History of the Popes* of this writer, will not confer the same honour on this work. Yet impartiality would seem to demand that they should do so, since that would be the only means of making known all the opinions of Ranke on the Reformation and on the Papacy. The best work in French with which we are acquainted on the Reformation in general, and on that of Germany in particular, is, without doubt, that published in our own times by M. Merle d'Aubigné. Why should this skilful writer, with so many excellent qualities, appear rather as the apologist of Luther than his historian ? I mean his apologist in his dogmatical views ; since in all which concerns the intentions of the reformer, as well as his moral character, he speaks as an impartial historian, who advances nothing without the support of testimony. After reading the work of M. Merle, the pamphleteers by profession will not be permitted to continue their puerile calumnies against Luther or Calvin.

undertake again the work of the reformers, and reform their necessarily imperfect labours, the task must be commenced with the aim of establishing a church, if any permanent results are desired.\*

The principal grounds on which the reformers relied to impress on their labours the seal of immortality, and to secure for them the regard even of those who could not agree with them, were their respect for the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which they considered as inspired by the spirit of God himself; and their decided wish for the prevalence of the authority of this holy book above all other authority, convinced as they were that the Bible reveals all the designs of God with regard to man, and that the duty of the Christian, whether professed theologian or simple believer, consists in receiving its contents without discussion and with complete obedience. This was the principle which they placed in bold relief in all their writings, in their disputations, in their dialogues, and in the bosom of their assembled diets, where they appealed only to the decisions of Holy Writ.† This is not the place to discuss this principle in itself; my task, at present, is to state what has been, and not to show what ought to have been. It is sufficient for me to remark that the remote cause of Rationalism has been this insufficiency of power in the principles of the reformers to supplant the ancient church. Had Luther or his disciples thought proper to

\* As this refers principally to the Lutheran church, whose doctrines have always prevailed in Germany, it will be sufficient to state that its doctrinal books contain, besides the three creeds of the primitive church, the Confession of Faith known as that of Augsburg, the Articles of Smalcalde, the two catechisms of Luther, and the Form of Concord (*Concordienformel*). If to these symbolical books, which have always had the same authority with the Lutherans as the Council of Trent has had among the Catholics, are added Melanethon's *Apology for the Confession of Augsburg* and his *Loci Communes*, we shall be able to form a clear and precise idea of Lutheran Christianity. There have been published in our own days several works, rich in materials and well fitted to instruct thoroughly in the principles of pure and true Lutheranism. Among these are the *Doctrines of the Lutheran Church* (*Symbolik der Luth. Kirche*), by C. Kölner: Hamburg, 1837,—the first volume of a collection which will contain the doctrinal books of all Christian communities; and *A General View of Christian Doctrine* (*Die allgemeine Symbolik*), by Guerike, Professor at Halle: Leipzig, 1839. The impartial historian ought to mention also the *Creed* of Möhler, a Bavarian priest, the best work which Catholicism has produced for a long time, 3rd edit., Mayence, 1838; as well as the original work of Gunther, an Austrian priest, whom we shall have occasion to mention in the chapter devoted to Catholic theology. His work is entitled *Der letzte Symbolik*. Vienna, 1834.

† Seckendorf says expressly, "Duobus fundamentis omnia scripta Lutheri dogmatica innituntur: affirmat ut certa et credenda, quæ ex sacra scriptura probari possunt; negat articulos fidei esse, quæ ex scriptura pro talibus non possunt demonstrari."—(*Commentarius de Lutherismo*, i., sect. 45, p. 163.)

put their own reason in opposition to the established doctrines, the people, too often chosen the supreme judge in polemical matters, would have treated them as daring spirits, and would at most have thought them worthy of the fate then inflicted on the heretical and impious; but persuaded as they were that the reformers did nothing more than draw the light of the Gospel from under the bushel, they hesitated not to range themselves under the standard of the highest authority. It is true that the reformers were subsequently compelled to add something to the Bible, —the confessions of faith, for example; but they did so only to give an account of their belief to those who accused them of incredulity. In their eyes, the confessions of faith were nothing more than the biblical doctrine arranged in the order of subjects; they were, so to say, only a programme containing an analysis of primitive Christianity, although by the fact they showed the intention of placing the new institutions on somewhat durable foundations.\*

Though it may be said with truth, therefore, that the principles of Rationalism, logically speaking, are confounded with those of Protestantism, as founded in Germany, or at least that they derive their origin thence, and that Rationalism is the inevitable consequence of the establishment of the Reformation in that country, yet when I find grave authors, such as Paulus, Wegscheider, Ammon, Bretschneider, and others, give Luther credit for the liberality of principles professed in our times, while others accuse him of having introduced into the world destructive principles which menace the very existence of our social

\* In the Form of Concord itself are these words, which I quote in the original, that the expressions may not be weakened by the translation I might be able to give:—"Sacras litteras solas unicam et certissimam illam regulam esse credimus ad quam omnia dogmata erigere et secundum quam de omnibus tum doctrinis tum doctoribus judicare oporteat. Verbum Dei tanquam immotam veritatem pro fundamento ponimus."—(*Form. Concordiæ*, Littman's edition, pp. 547, 551.) In the Articles of Smalcalde, art. 2, also, we read, "Regulam certam habemus, ut videlicet verbum Dei condant articulos fidei, et præterea nemo, ne Angelus quidem." This *nemo* refers to things as well as to persons, and therefore disputes the decisive authority of the confessions of faith. Here, I repeat, is the weak side of the Reformation, not to have the power of showing an authority whence there can be no appeal. "The Protestant communion would, however, be inconsistent, did it wish to render private opinions subordinate to the creeds and confessions of faith."—(*Ancillon, Thoughts on Man*, &c. Berlin, 1829. Vol. i. p. 46.) How is this right of human liberty to be reconciled with the no less real right of the authority of doctrine over the mind? All sincere minds of every Christian community which hope for the time when there shall be but one flock and one shepherd should labour to solve this question. As we shall see, it is not sufficient to bring forth the light from under the bushel,—we must prevent its extinction.



institutions, I am tempted to say, with the poet, that the reformer deserves neither so great an honour nor such a reproach.\* All the merit of Luther, in the eyes of an enlightened man, to whatever Christian body he may belong, consists in having restored to honour that book which has been the support of the doctors of all ages who have wished that their instructions should faithfully reflect the pure teachings of Christ, and in having, by the extraordinary multiplicity and energy of his writings, given a strong impulse to the human mind; in having aroused in the Christian community a spirit of study and liberty of thought, of which succeeding ages have reaped the fruits. "Whatever may be the bias of our minds," says Hallam, with justice, "as to the truth of Luther's doctrines, we should be careful, in considering the Reformation as a part of the history of mankind, not to be misled by the superficial and ungrounded representations which we sometimes find in modern writers. Such is this, that Luther, struck by the absurdity of the prevailing superstitions, was desirous of introducing a more rational system of religion; or that he contended for the freedom of inquiry, and the boundless privileges of individual judgment; or, what others have been pleased to suggest, that his zeal for learning and ancient philosophy led him to attack the ignorance of the monks and the crafty policy of the church which withstood all liberal studies. These notions are merely fallacious refinements."†

But as to the work of the reformer in itself, however great it may be, if we judge of it without prejudice and with the composure of a writer who rises superior to the prepossession of birth and of sect, we cannot but confess its too evident imperfections. Honour is due to him for his resistance, with all the energy inspired by a good cause, to the numerous superstitions of his period. But posterity would have seen him expire, protesting with his last breath, the Gospel in his hand, in the prison or on the funeral pile, kindled by the jealous anger of his enemies, rather than behold him annul the constitution of a church

\* In one of his academic discourses, Dr. Paulus, in order to prove that Luther was not only a *biblical theologian* but also a *Rationalist*, relates the following anecdote: "The Elector of Brandenburg having asked the reformer if it were true that he had said that he should not stop unless convinced from Scripture, he replied, 'Yes, my lord, unless I am convinced by clear and evident reasons.'" Necessarily, to the mind of Luther, these clear and evident reasons could only come from men relying on the testimony of the Bible. Wegscheider, *Institut. Theolog.*, 7th edit. 1833. p. 74; Ammon, in the *Magazin für Theol. Wissenschaften*, second part, of the year 1827; Bretschneider, in his pamphlet, *Luther in our Times* (*Luther zu unserer Zeit*: Erfurt, 1817. p. 190);—show this wish to make the principal reformer a *Rationalist*.

† Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, 3rd edit. p. 299.

which only could become the safeguard of evangelical doctrine when finally accepted by the people; for at some more or less remote period the Reformation must inevitably have been effected, and its success would have been the more complete had the blood of Luther called for vengeance on the corrupters of the Gospel. Then would this Reformation have been more extensive, nor would its continuance have been repeatedly compromised by a neology which no authority can confound or repress. If Reason, which is not Rationalism, could have prevailed at this period, when all great qualities found such admirable representatives, the fine arts in Leo X., the chivalric spirit in Francis I., the delirium of love in Henry VIII., imperial authority in Charles V., the enthusiasm of faith in Luther, the union of literature and religion in Beza and Melancthon, the science of organisation in Calvin, nobility of character in Zwinglius, moderation and knowledge in Erasmus, where however, stifled by self-love, they unhappily heard no voice, listened to no opinions but their own,—if, I say, Reason could have prevailed at such a period, it would doubtless have found an organ in that one of this illustrious company whom public opinion then pointed out as the true representative of the religious ideas occupying the middle station between two parties, by which they were at once praised and calumniated; ideas which, yielding to the just demands of the reformers, would have prevented the entire overthrow of a church that needed purification, not destruction. Erasmus was the man whom all parties sought to gain to their cause; but whom the foolish of all parties repulsed when he would have shown them the boundaries which they must not pass, if they wished to labour effectually and to erect a lasting edifice. It is true that he sometimes displayed a weakness of character, inconsistent with a pure and lively faith in the truths which alone we know have the power of regenerating mankind, and of enabling us to fulfil our immortal destinies. This weakness has been characterised in a more severe manner by some who have confounded it with an ill-will which, could it be clearly proved, would be inexcusable, and even with a total want of the power to enact the noble part of the reformer.\* But who can say that Erasmus would not have freed himself from it, had he seen his contemporaries prefer the moderation of his language to the extravagance of party spirit, and becoming bewildered in the void of their often furious declamations, advance wisely in a path of reform which would have been more lasting and more generally approved! But when he saw himself left far behind in his plans of reform, he who had been one of the first to

\* Particularly Merle d'Aubigné, in the first volume (page 148-156) of his otherwise so excellent *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*.

oppose the insolent pretensions of Rome, who had artfully satirised gluttony, avarice, and the ignoble propensities of the monks, with which he was too well acquainted, who had in a thousand ways thrown discredit on the superstitions of the people which prevented their approach to God and to the Saviour,—when he saw, as he himself says, that it was as dangerous to speak as to keep silence, then he became thoroughly disheartened: and if he did not entirely abandon the struggle, if he launched against the reformers some of those epigrams which had excited such derision of the monkish superstition, it must be attributed to the feelings necessarily experienced by a great mind, which finds itself prevented from doing the good for which it has so earnestly longed. It is scarcely possible to remain insensible before the triumph of violence when we can foresee the immense results which will ensue. And how could Erasmus fail to show himself a man when the voice of his writings, which had until that time excited so many minds, was drowned in the warlike and political tumult, and when he saw his lessons on the reform of human institutions so greatly compromised, on one side by impetuosity, and on the other by bad faith and injustice? Erasmus showed, through the whole course of his life, that he desired the thorough reform of the church, and he laboured, according to his power, to obtain it, even before Germany was aroused by Luther and his companions. This fact has given rise to the saying that Luther hatched the egg of the Reformation which Erasmus had laid; but the sage of Rotterdam saw further than the theologian of Wittenberg; and he thought that the triumph of reform ought not to be purchased by the destruction of all which already existed; when by the means of the new lights which had just arisen, whose empire the recent discovery of printing was about to extend so widely, all which the world desired might be obtained willingly or unwillingly, but without the violence of a schism.

But it must not be thought that the man who contended for reform, so long as it remained within the limits of moderation, did not believe in the evangelical doctrines, which were the very strength of Luther among the people whom his ardent words excited. Erasmus professed all their principles with sincerity; and even if he had not expressed them a thousand times in his struggles against the superstition of the members of his community, his paraphrase of the New Testament is too striking a monument of his eminently Christian faith, for it to be necessary to undertake the proof of it here.\* But it is,

\* The edition which I have before me is that of Hanover (1568); and the editor in his preface declares, with justice, that it is a *pious, wise, useful and necessary* work.

perhaps, necessary to state here, that he was as far removed from the principles of Rationalism as from the superstitions which he endeavoured to extirpate from Christianity. The word of God, as declared in the Bible which he gave to the world in his critical edition of the New Testament (1516), in the Greek and Latin languages, thus doing for the learned, what Luther afterwards did for the people, was to him an indisputable authority; and he did not believe that human reason, having received this Word as its guide, could appeal from it to its own tribunal, and force from it a sense agreeable to its own wishes.

It is by no means rare in our days to hear of the Rationalism of Erasmus; but unless by this word we understand that union of reason and faith which we have defined above, we could not commit a greater error than in comparing his rational belief to that religion of reason which some endeavour to confound with Protestantism. Against this religion, he would have aimed all the arrows of his quiver with as much ardour as Luther himself would have done, had any one disputed with him concerning that which he declared to be the essence of the Christian religion, viz., the salvation of man by faith in Christ, the only mediator between heaven and earth,—Luther, who, in a polemical work written during the struggle of the two parties, showed that, at no very remote period, the consequence of attempting to submit the truths of religion to human reason would be the re-establishment of Paganism in the midst of Christendom.\*

\* *Responsio ad Epistolam apologeticam incerto Autore propositam*. Frib. Brig. 1530. Two writers of dissimilar merit, but whose testimony has great weight, have spoken as follows; one upon unity of doctrine, “We cannot deny that the reform planned by Erasmus would have been more pure; for the spread of truth by the increase of enlightenment is in accordance with the true spirit of the Gospel; but he was wrong not to take part in the actual movement, and *not to yield somewhat of the purity of his ideas*, since so long as pontifical authority remained as it then was, the realization of his views was impossible.”—(Schleiermacher’s *Posthumous Works*, vol. vi. p. 582, eleventh vol. of *Complete Works*.) Speaking of the misunderstanding between Erasmus and Luther, Baumgarten-Crusius says, “Their misunderstanding was endless; but if Luther was right in denying the power of Erasmus to rise to the profound and religious meaning of St. Augustin, even in a philosophical sense, this important subject could not be treated as a scholastic question. It should have been understood that Luther signified by free will, the power remaining to fallen man, and his inclination towards God, if, however, he retained any.”—(*Compendium der Christlichen Dogmengeschichte*, p. 239. Leipz. 1840.)

But how could Erasmus subscribe to a doctrine which he knew to be opposed to the daily experience of every man? Yes, there is no true liberty save in a being delivered from sin by a regeneration of the mind, and it is this liberty alone which God regards, but not the less does free will exist in every being gifted with reason, since there is a great difference between the isolated acts of a will free

The question is not, then, whether a Reformation was needed in the sixteenth century: not only have all sincere Catholics allowed this, which, indeed, they could not deny without closing their eyes to the indisputable evidence of history, but the most positive confessions and the most energetic accusation of the Romish church came from those who afterwards did nothing to assist in obtaining the Reformation, because they well knew that in putting their hands to the work, their own position would be compromised if the abuses were thoroughly extirpated.\* The only question is, whether the Reformation, such as it was undertaken and executed, could produce happy results for religion and for morality. In the pursuit and development of the principles which it laid down, we have seen the preparation, the birth and the progress of that system of Rationalism so little fitted to convince us of their entire propriety.

but unmoved by the divine spirit, and those which are the ordinary result of a state of mind arrived at by faith. Here lay the cause of the perseverance of Erasmus in maintaining the semi-pelagian doctrine of which he has been accused.

\* It cannot be unknown that the Councils of Pisa, of Florence, of Constance, and of Basle, saw the evil which existed, and either could not or would not apply the remedy. Nor should the sarcasms be unknown, which were directed against the institutions of the Romish church by that frivolous maker of romances, Æneas Sylvius, who nevertheless, when raised to the pontificate under the name of Pius II., lived by abuses, as did those whose dignities he had coveted. Let it suffice for me to quote here the confession of Adrian VI., one of those rare pontiffs who sincerely wished to do good. He said to his envoy to the Diet of Worms, "You will ingenuously avow that God has permitted this persecution (the rupture of Germany with Rome) on account of the sins of men, especially of the priests and bishops. We know that even in this holy chair of Rome, abominations have been committed, abuses in spiritual things, excesses of authority, and in fact all things have been corrupted." See the Catholic writer, who continued the ecclesiastical history of Baronius (and whose work was printed at Rome and Cologne, under the title *Annales ecclesiast. ab anno quo, &c.*) to 1522, No. 66; and in the collection of *Luther's Works*. Walch's edition, 15th part, p. 2534. Those who would know thoroughly the deplorable state of the church in the sixteenth century have only to read the works of the celebrated Gerson, whose knowledge and piety are undisputed, and afterwards to compare them with those of the no less truthful Erasmus, in order to be convinced that the Christian religion had only a nominal existence upon the earth, and how laudable were those who energetically demanded the reformation of the whole church. The cause was holy, the means employed were not always wise.



## CHAPTER III.

## VIEWS OF LUTHER AND MELANCTHON AS TO THE POWER OF HUMAN REASON AND ITS EMPLOYMENT IN RELIGION.

IT cannot enter into my plan, nor can it be my intention, to wage war against the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which was in itself a holy cause ; but I cannot refrain, after having done justice to the intentions of the reformers, who are so often misunderstood, when their opponents, instead of combatting the tendency of their principles, where they are offensive, launch into extravagant and calumnious abuse of the men themselves,—I cannot, I say, refrain from showing the weak side of the principles advanced by Luther and the inconsistencies which resulted from them.

There is, doubtless, something pleasing in this resolution of elevating God alone in laying down his word as the sole and only rule of faith and morals ; but when the first impression has passed away, we perceive immediately that the edifice raised by the reformers on a base apparently indestructible, and capable of defying all attacks of the human mind, is, however, only built in the air ; for, independently of the question which presents itself, whether this Bible, which should be judge without appeal, is really the word of God, it must also be proved to the strict inquirer that the translation which you, Luther, have made of it in the vulgar tongue, and which will be a new and indisputable title to literary glory, is a faithful representation of this divine word ; and here it is that Luther, notwithstanding all his prejudices against philosophy, arms himself with all the powers of his reason to make an apology for his work. But still he did not act as a Rationalist, because the arguments which he employed were auxiliaries of the imposing evidence of the word to which he refers every question, and because Rationalism does not consist in the employment of the reason in any discussion ; but in pretensions to deny the truth of all which this reason cannot comprehend. But in doing so, he recognised the right of contradiction in others. It is in vain that Luther grows angry, and that in order to come to a conclusion with his adversaries, he takes the tone of infallibility, and says, parodying a well-known Latin verse,—“ I, Martin Luther, so

wish it, so order it ; my will shall take the place of reason." He then committed not only a moral fault, but the greatest deviation from the principles which he had laid down on the necessity of obeying God alone in his word. However, I must say that his argument never attacked that authority which he declared to be above discussion, nor in his numerous inconsistencies did he ever permit himself to oppose knowledge to faith, reason to revelation, or philosophy to Christianity. We must except one single case, in which he seemed wanting, even in common sense, when, in opposition to a decree of the Sorbonne, he attempted to show in what the different views of the same truth might agree.

Yes, though Luther did not always entertain of human reason in general, whose weakness and whose false tendencies he deplored, nor of philosophy, which he confounded with scholasticism, those reasonable ideas which we must have, if we do not wish to abdicate human dignity ; yet he forgot these, his own sentiments, when he was endeavouring to confound an adversary. Then he spoke of human reason as every man of good sense must speak. "Reason," says he, "is certain among all the things of life, and, what is still better, it is even something divine. It is a sun, and at the same time a god, placed as a ruler over the affairs of this life. And God did not deprive Adam of this magnificent faculty after his fall ; he rather guaranteed it."\* If there is anything to blame in these words, it is rather the boldness than the narrowness of the thought : but the boldness, in reality, lies only in the expression. He says again :—"Though reason can neither comprehend nor attain to the light nor the works of God, as in the affirmative it judges only in an uncertain and superficial way ; yet in the negative, that is to say, in things which are not, its judgment is certain : therefore, if it does not comprehend what God is, it comprehends positively what God is not. Whatever then is contrary to reason is still more opposed to God ; for how should not that be contrary to divine truth which is opposed to the reason that is human truth?"† This language of Luther is similar to that used by all theologians who, without wishing to be Rationalists, in the received sense of our times, have not thought it necessary blindly to accept or to reject doctrines on which their whole destiny depended. But when Luther's opinions concerning the sacrament of the Lord's Supper were attacked, his language was no longer so reasonable, and in his anathemas against human reason he ceased to

\* *Luther's Works*. Walch's edition, vol. xix. 1778.

† In his *Treatise on Ecclesiastical Vows and on Convents*. Walch's edition, vol. xix. 1940.

distinguish the use of it from the abuse. He was not content with affirming that a thing does not lose all the characteristics of credibility, even when we are not able to comprehend it entirely; but he added, that should revelation lay before us irrational propositions, reason ought not to hesitate in assenting to them.\*

It is not unknown that in his attacks on the theologians of Paris, of which I have spoken, Luther maintained this principle, "that what is true in theology is not always true in philosophy."† It would have been very reasonable had he said, in other terms, that philosophy cannot always demonstrate with the severity of mathematical reasoning what revelation affirms as certain. But I repeat it, that it was only in the warmth of disputation that the most revolting paradoxes did not startle him.

In his *Introduction to the Apocalypse of St. John*, he maintains that before his time the Holy Scriptures had been corrupted in the Universities by philosophy and reason. But reason had then, apparently, taken the place of Scripture, and did not submit to its decisions. He says again, in a curious discourse on the prevailing philosophy, "The blind Aristotle alone governs in the Universities, and his empire is as extensive as that of Christ. If I had a piece of advice to offer, it would be that the works of Aristotle should be entirely laid aside, as well those which treat of physics, as those on metaphysics, on the mind and on morals, which have hitherto been considered the best; also those which boast of natural things, in which, however, nothing is to be learned either of natural or spiritual things. For God has taken care to give us the sacred Scriptures, wherein we can learn all things abundantly, and very much whereof Aristotle *did not perceive the least odour*" (*nicht den kleinsten Geruch je empfunden hat*).‡

\* In the pamphlet of Bretschneider, already quoted, *Luther in our Times* (*Luther zu unserer Zeit*), we find a great number of analogous quotations.

† A curious explanation of this paradox may be read in a Dissertation by C. Crusius, *Opuscula Philosophico-Theologica*, 1750. These are the words of the reformer himself:—"Sorbona pessime definiit, idem esse verum in philosophia et theologia, impieque damnavit eos qui contrarium docuerunt." And with a deplorable confusion of words, he adds:—"Nam hac sententia abominabili docuit captivare articulos fidei sub judicium rationis humanæ, cum contra Paulus doceat, captivandum esse omnem intellectum, haud dubie et philosophiam in obsequium Christi." Melancthon wrote a vindication of Luther against these theologians of the Sorbonne, the very title of which agrees with the habitual character of Melancthon,—"Adversus furiosum Parisiensium theologastrorum decretum, Philippi Melanctonis pro Luthero Apologia."—(*Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Bretschneider, p. 398.)

‡ *Manual of the History of Christian Dogmas* (*Lehrbuch der Christlichen Dogmengeschichte*), by Neudecker, vol. iii. p. 144.



In one of the writings collected by the care of De Wette, he affirms that Aristotle spread so many absurdities that not even an ass could keep silence.\*

Such were the prejudices of Luther against human reason and the philosophy to which it applies. As we see, he perceived the abuse which might be made of it only in others, and in himself recognised nothing more than its salutary employment. I would that I could say, without reservation, that the wise Melancthon never partook of these prejudices; but history is not of this opinion. It shows us this celebrated assistant of Luther, endeavouring, in the first years of his theological labours, to exaggerate to his own mind the depravity of human nature, for the furtherance of the new dogmas which he was establishing, and destroying, one by one, the flowers of classical literature which had adorned his youth.†

But here again it was the abuse of reason which Melancthon confounded with its judicious use. Listen when he launches condemnation against the Pelagian error; he censures it, not because the Breton monk (Pelagius) considered man as perfectly independent of God, and having no need of his powerful protection; but because he destroyed all distinction between philosophy and the Gospel. Now it was not in that respect that Pelagius was reprehensible; for if the Gospel is the truth, it should, on that account alone, be considered as the expression of the highest philosophy. And what occasion is there to preserve this division of truths into two classes, those of the one being regarded as philosophical, those of the other as revealed or theological truths?

Being, however, of a gentle, modest, conciliating character, and more accustomed to meditation than Luther, Melancthon was not slow to profess more rational principles concerning the power of human reason, and he was again heard to discourse with the same charm as before, on the philosophical systems, being careful, however, to separate them from all the subtilties of the schoolmen. As he was, above all, the friend of peace, there was nothing, save his conscience, which he was not willing to sacrifice for the acquisition of this precious blessing; and to this noble aim he consecrated all his powers and his talents, when the parties which had grown up in the bosom of the Reformation persisted in disturbing it.

Luther said that he fought with the body of the army as with the devil, and that he thus plucked out the thorns, while his companion laboured calmly, contested politely; and his writings are not the less an

\* *Letters and Miscellanies of Luther (Briefe, Sendschreiben und Andenken)*, published by de Wette. Berlin, 1825-28, vol. i. p. 15.

† See his *Loci communes rerum theologicarum*, edit. of 1577, pp. 71, 105.

arsenal against the Romish church because they contain only fine and delicate weapons, which are perhaps more fitted to inflict mortal wounds. Luther cried aloud that the word of God, able alone to destroy the whole edifice of popery, was a warrior's sword; Melancthon said that this same word was a celestial ambrosia which filled the mind with the purest delight; and these two modes of expression show admirably the different characters of the two reformers. On account of their peculiar co-operation in the work of reform, they have been compared to two mill-stones, each of which is necessary to grind the grain, since the force of the one commences what the force of the other completes.

The variations which we meet with in the works of Melancthon, and especially in the editions of his *Loci Theologici*, the first of which only is esteemed by strict Lutherans, do not show so much an inconsistency in his opinions as a desire to unite the differing parties, by making concessions in terms only, without changing the meaning. These concessions or modifications could only wound his self-love as an author or a theologian, but he was accustomed to sacrifice himself on the altar of Christian charity. With so many admirable qualities, he could not long misunderstand the noble gift of human reason which the Almighty has conferred on us all, nor could he persist in his accusations of philosophy in general. When his mind returned to more just ideas on the subject, especially after the death of Luther, he saw that it is only necessary to place this sublime faculty under the influence of a superior power, to enable it to fulfil its original destiny, and from the moment when his writings and his lessons in the University of Wittemberg began to shine with this sacred light, he received the approbation of many of the most illustrious men of the time. But the zealots of his party saw in this conduct a renunciation of that which alone they considered as the truth, above all, in respect to the question of human liberty, so intimately connected with the use of reason in matters of religion; several even attacked him when they ought rather to have honoured him for confirming the immortal alliance which Luther had wished to sever between reason and faith.\*

Luther, however, held in great estimation this production (*Loci Theologici*) of his friend, as we see from his correspondence;† and theologians were for a long time guided by this important doctrinal work, which, though not written, properly speaking, in a systematic manner, may be considered, from the order which prevails throughout the whole, as the first of that long series of theological books in which Protestant

\* In the *History of Protestant Doctrine*, by Plank (*Geschichte der Protestant. Lehrbegriffe*), vol. iv., is to be found a detailed account of this controversy.

† *Luther's Works*, published at Hamburg, 1826; 5th pamphlet, 231.

Germany is so prolific, and which would furnish so many materials to a modern Bossuet, if the argument of *Variations* now possessed any weight. Schleiermacher \* said of the *Loci Communes*, that they hold a middle place between symbolical and systematic faith; and Hermann, after remarking that the complexion of the doctrine contained in the *Loci* is truly Pauline (*acht Paulinisch*), adds, that Melancthon established the dogma of the weakness and the miseries of man, only by his admission, with St. Paul, of justification by the merits of Christ.† We should, it seems to me, do more honour to the philosophical mind of the professor of Wittenberg, in saying that he admitted the doctrine of justification, because, independently of what he found in the Scriptures, he thought that doctrine fitted to calm the anguish of the guilty human conscience which feels that it has broken the laws that it should have kept.

The founders of the Reformation in Germany were then supernaturalists in the strictest sense of the term; that is to say, they believed in an immediate revelation from God contained in the Scriptures; that there was nothing to discuss in those writings, and that they ought to be received with docility and respect. I must now state what were their views upon the revelation itself, and what they understood by the inspiration of the sacred writers; which they substituted for the infallibility of the church from which they had separated.

\* In his *History of the Christian Church*, p. 615 (*Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*).

† Hermann's *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik*, p. 13. Leipzig, 1842. Besides the *Corpus Reformatorum*, which contains all the documents which throw light on the life and doctrines of this able assistant of Luther, we may refer to a characteristic essay published by Galle, under this title, "*Versuch einer Charakteristik Melancthons als Theologen und einer Entwicklung seines Lehrbegriffes*." Halle, 1840.

## CHAPTER IV.

VIEWS OF LUTHER AND MELANCTHON ON REVELATION AND ON THE  
INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It was once sufficient merely to pronounce the word Revelation, and its meaning was immediately understood by every one ; but Rationalism and speculative theology have had the effect of confusing words and giving to them new meanings. It is true that men have always known how to distinguish in the Scripture that which is termed a revelation of God in his works ; for example, as when the Apostle Paul declares that since the creation of the world God has revealed himself to heathen sages by his perfections, which are seen, so to say, by the eye that considers his works ; they have known, I say, how to distinguish this general revelation from another more particular kind, which these words signify : “ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” and, again, this declaration in the Epistle to the Hebrews : “ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son.” And to prevent the possibility of being mistaken as to the nature of this revelation, which is made to us by him who was in the bosom of the Heavenly Father, the Gospel declares that he who thus initiates us into Christian truth existed before time with a living individual existence, such as we conceive of when we speak of our own, and that thus he was able to reveal to us what he knew of our condition before God, since he himself was with God. This kind of revelation is attested by the historical monuments which form the basis of the whole Christian faith, and which ought not to be passed over in silence by the impartial historian. Nor ought I to neglect to say that the writers who undertake to record the contents of this revelation declare themselves to be inspired by God, and consequently sheltered from the possibility of error in relating to us what they have seen and heard. It was with these ideas on the subjects of inspiration and revelation—ideas adopted by every church which has existed since the time of the apostles—that the reformers declared that they should be

satisfied with pruning from the tree of faith its useless branches, carefully respecting the trunk, which always possessed sufficient vigour to shoot forth new boughs, under whose shade should repose the coming generations. Yes, all the confessions of faith of the Protestants bear witness to their adherence to these capital truths, and it is thus that Luther speaks of them: "This is revelation, that which God speaks with a living voice (*mündlich redet*), and his illumination of the heart by the clearness of his light in a much more certain way than in dreams and visions."\* Here Luther contrasts the revelations made to the ancient prophets and those of the divine founder of Christianity, with the pretended ones of which the visionaries of his age boasted. "God has spoken, and believe not that his are passing words, such as we speak; but know that they are eternal words which have been said from all eternity, and which will be repeated so long as there shall exist creatures to hear them."† These words energetically express that a revelation being once given, the Scriptures which contain it ought never to give place to other teachings. Melancthon, who was gifted with a mildness of character, which made him always seek for modified expressions, never, however, permitted himself to entertain on the supernatural nature of revelation, views different from those of the ancient church. But as he never had occasion to dispute with the adversaries of this doctrine, it is not surprising that we do not discover special proofs of his belief in it in his writings, though they all evidently take for granted these first truths.

The intelligence of the reformers showed them, moreover, that if their work were not to be destruction, but simply purification, they ought not to lay down any principles but those fitted to preserve instead of corrupting the faith. It was this consideration which induced them to add to the doctrine of a Divine revelation, supernatural and immediate, which we find in the Scriptures, that of the inspiration of the contents of those Scriptures. They even considered this principle as the bulwark of the new church. It is not easy to see, in fact, how Protestantism could maintain its place as a religion, if it were to repudiate this belief in the inspiration of the books which form the basis of its faith and morals. Take away this faith from amidst its churches, and you deprive Protestantism of its religious character; you make it a scholastic system with more or less semblance of probability in the exposition of its doctrines, but you never make it a religion, properly so called, because you have taken away the august sanction which it

\* *Luther's Works*, vol. i. 1405.

† *Luther's Works*, vol. iii. 46.



enjoyed ; you deliver it without defence, bound hand and foot, into the power of the first logician who may wish to establish in its place either Catholicism or Pantheism. There is no medium between these two doctrines except a belief in the word of God received into a simple and faithful heart. There have been quoted certain opinions uttered by Luther on some parts of Scripture, which might give reason for the supposition that he had some doubts as to this fundamental question of inspiration.\*

But, in so supposing, we should commit a double injustice in not remarking that the observations of Luther relate only to those books whose apostolic origin had been doubted before his time ; and in forgetting that he, himself, subsequently modified the too great severity of his judgments, and sought to make amends for his too bold attack ; referring the whole affair to the conscientious inquiries of the learned.† It is also true that Luther advanced the doctrine that there was a distinction to be made between the different parts of the New Testament ; but he never spoke of diverse degrees of inspiration, of which some have wished to accuse him on the authority of these words : “ As Christ is the sun of the Holy Scriptures, we ought to take him as a touchstone to discover which of these books preach Christ, and moreover incline men towards him.” ‡

Such a criterion ought not to be judged with rigour, since it is not given with logical precision, but only *modo oratorio* ; and it cannot contradict the whole of Luther’s opinions, which are entirely contrary to it. Indeed, we may read in very many parts of his works, composed at different periods of his life, and even at the time when he put forth his first severe judgment on the Epistle of James,—we may, I say, read passages which sufficiently prove that he never ceased to maintain the divine inspiration of the whole of Scripture ; and, consequently it is unjust to wish to attribute to him rationalistic principles on this

\* *History of the Formation of, and the Changes Effected in, the Protestant Doctrines* (*Geschichte der Entstehung, der Veränderung und der Bildung unseres Prot. Lehrbegriff, &c.*). Leipzig, 1791-98, by Plank, vol. ii. 95-97.

† See an excellent dissertation on this subject in the *Review for Lutheran Theology* (*Zeitschrift für die gesammte Luther. Theologie und Kirche*), published by Rudelbach and Guericke, in the second part for 1840.

‡ See his *Works*, vol. v. p. 1700, in his commentary on Psalm cxvii. It is still the custom to quote against Luther what he said in his preliminary discourse on the New Testament in 1524 : “ The Gospel of John, the Epistles of Paul, especially those to the Romans and the First of Peter, are the nerve and marrow as compared with the other books.” But if we judge these words calmly, and apart from all party spirit, we shall find in them only a preference for certain books, without implying, in them, any superiority to the others.

point. Thus he writes in his *Captivity of Babylon*: "There is not a single word of Paul which ought not to be preserved and universally obeyed in the church." He afterwards endeavours to unite the principles of Scripture and of the faith, saying that "the Council of Nice had not established or revived the ancient doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which already existed in the church, and, consequently, the Council did nothing more than defend it against the heresy of Arius; for this doctrine had been revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, given publicly by heaven, whence the church had received it before the Council, and the church transmitted it to the Council." \*

It is then evident, that with Luther it was an essential article of faith, which, above all others, marked his point of view as purely objective, that the Holy Scriptures are the only light to guide us on the way to heaven. "The doctrines of Scripture," says he himself, "constitute our heaven, while ordinary life is the earth: in this life are sin, error, impurity, fruitless labour, and troubles; but the doctrines are entirely different; they are holy, pure, clear, celestial, and divine: it is not worth while to compare doctrine with life, for there is more importance in one letter, yes, even in one clause of Scripture, than in anything else in heaven or on earth." †

It is clear that he here speaks of the whole of Scripture as the word of God: and when we know with what a masterly hand he could explain this principle, when he opposed the traditions which were not supported by the word of God, we unhesitatingly recognise in Luther the zealous defender of the divine origin and inspiration of the Scriptures.

It is right to state these views of the two chief Lutheran reformers: first, to show that it is vain to wish to give them credit for Rationalism; and that liberty of thought, the acquisition of the eighteenth century, which, being only the good side of Rationalism and not Rationalism itself, will indisputably add to the glory of religious principles which are more firmly fixed than those of Luther, and which our age is called on to consecrate; secondly, and still more, to show that it was quite foreign to the intentions of the reformers that the principles laid down by them, that is to say, the substitution of the authority of the sacred books, and the creeds, for the authority of the tribunal of the church, which was founded both on the Bible and on tradition, should become the undoubted, although remote, cause of the

\* *Works*, vol. xvi. 2672, in the *Treatise on the Councils of the Church*.

† *Works*, vol. viii. 2660, in the detailed explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians.

appearance of Rationalism. This principle, based on an arbitrary foundation, and in no way supported by institutions which might make it respected, could not prevent the explanations and contradictions of the human mind from aiming their blows against a citadel without defence.



## CHAPTER V.

## FORMATION OF THE CREEDS—STATE OF THEOLOGY FROM THE DEATH OF THE REFORMERS TO THE PROPAGATION OF PIETISM BY SPENER.

As we have seen, the fundamental principle of the Protestant Reformation was that the Holy Scriptures, considered by all as divinely inspired, ought to be the sole guide of the faith and morals of Christians, and it was by successfully bringing forward those passages of them which treat of the unity of God and of Jesus as the sole mediator, that the reformers threw down the columns of the new pantheon which had been erected on the ruins of ancient paganism. But the vagueness and elasticity of this principle soon became evident; and when the powerful Charles the Fifth demanded from the innovators that they should show him some more positive definition of their opinions, they hastened to draw up creeds which enumerated the articles of belief that they maintained they had found in the word of God, and which they opposed to the most recent dogmas, whose origin they pointed out in the decisions of the councils or the decrees of the Pope. This had been the mode of proceeding against the first heretics when was composed the creed bearing the name of the Apostles' or those of Nice and Constantinople, for the purpose of showing the general opinion of the church on the question at issue, and of imposing silence on innovators. It was never considered sufficient, in order to tranquillise any disturbance in the church, to refer the disputants to the Bible, since it was well known that they would have interpreted it, each according to his own opinions: but it was said, you are in open opposition to our faith, which consists of the belief that there is one God the Father Almighty, &c.\* When new

\* In the three first centuries the creed which bears the name of the Apostles', though it was drawn up by some one of their immediate successors, was the only decisive authority in the church. Excepting the clause *descended into hell*, which was inserted afterwards, (with what aim I know not,) we find it almost word for word in Irenæus (*Adversus Hæc.*, lib. i. c. 10; and in an abridged form in lib. iii. 4); several times in Tertullian (*De Virginibus Velandis*, c. 1; *Adversus Præxæan*, c. 2; *De Præscriptionibus Hæc.*, c. 13); in Origen (*περὶ ἀρχῶν*, § 4); and,

commotions arose in the church, it was thought necessary to amplify the Confession of Faith; but instead of placing by the side of each article of the creed some passages of Scripture, which would have more clearly determined its meaning, and increased its force, the churchmen had recourse to subtilties, and there appeared in succession the Creed of Nice (in A.D. 325), that of Constantinople (381), that of Ephesus (431), that of Calcedon (451), all of which sought too much to determine the doctrine of the Trinity, and that of the nature of the Saviour; and finally that which bears the name of Athanasius, whose first word *QUICUMQUE vult salvus esse*, is a flagrant heresy.\*

The first reformers, however, notwithstanding their predilection for the Apostles' Creed, made no objection to signing those confessions of faith which, they well knew, had been honoured by the church before the introduction of abuses; and they would have been content to propose them to their contemporaries, had not their disputes with the supporters of popery rendered it necessary to collect them into one, and support them by the testimony of such passages of Scripture as might establish their validity.

Several years had elapsed since Luther had burned, in the marketplace of Wittemberg, the papal bull which condemned his doctrine, when John of Saxony, who was about to appear before the Diet of Augsburg, invited his theologians, viz., Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Melancthon, to draw up a document, stating the principal points of dispute with Rome, and their most cogent arguments upon them. This document was to be based on the seventeen articles already laid before the Diet of Spire by the theologians of southern Germany, which it was to develope more fully, and arrange in a more systematic order.†

in fact, we find the substance of it in all the authors contemporaneous with those above cited. We can hence see the reason of the importance attached to it in modern times, when it has been frequently presented as a standard, around which all sects might rally, but has been rejected by the greater number on account of its too simple character.

\* We are still ignorant of the name of the subtle author of the Athanasian Creed. Some have attributed it to the Councils of the seventh century, others to the doctors of the sixth, as Virgilius or Fortunatus of Poitiers, and even to Hinemar of Rheims, in the 9th century. (B. de Montfaucon, *Diatrise in symbolum quicumque*, in *Athanasii opera*, vol. xi. 719-768. Tenzel, *Judicia eruditorum de symb. Athanasiano*, Gott. 1687.)

† We know that this Confession was read in German and in Latin, and that Melancthon had written it in both languages. The Latin copy was carried away to Brussels by Charles V., and though it has been diligently searched for, it has never been found.

This work was preceded by an address to the Emperor, informing him that the princes who supported the cause of reform presented it to the Diet of Augsburg, as being the expression of their faith, and of that of all who wished to withdraw from the pale of the Romish church ; and on this account it received the name of the Confession of Augsburg, which it still retains.

It was in 1530, that the Confession was presented and published, as it had been read before the Emperor ; but Melancthon was soon employed in changing some of the expressions, and in developing some statements which he thought too concise, and in the following year he issued an edition which is considered the most orthodox by the Lutherans of the present day. It was not, however, till 1540 that he published that edition for which he was so much reproached by the zealots of his party, and blamed by Guerike even in our times. In this he came forward to endeavour to conciliate the two great parties which were already beginning to tear the bosom of reform. It is under this modified creed that the reformed party, and the Lutherans of the present day, have united ; while the primitive Confession remains the property of those who, behind the rest of the world in their opinions, believe themselves the heirs of the pure doctrines of reform.

If, then, we add to this Confession, as I have already had occasion to say, the Articles of Smalcalde, which are of a more polemical nature, but are the same in spirit, the two Catechisms of Luther, the large one designed principally as a guide for preachers, the small one to be taught in schools, and the Formula of Concord, in drawing up which such distinguished theologians as Andreä, Chemnitz, Selnecker, Chitæus, Musculus, and Körner, assisted, and which professes to contain the whole of the Lutheran doctrine, as well as to unite into one body the scattered members of the evangelical church in Germany, we shall have all the doctrinal books which, in 1577, were considered as forming the standard of instruction in the churches and universities. But did these books possess a legitimate authority ? Was this authority consistent, above all, with the spirit of Protestant Christianity, which professes to obey only the word of God, and in no way to substitute any human authority for that of the Pope, from which its professors had withdrawn ?

In these two questions lies the difficulty of modern times in attempting to place the Protestant church on such a foundation that it may be able to defy indifference and incredulity, and keep pure and holy the receptacle of that faith which is acknowledged to be contained in the book which all theologians, on different grounds, agree in naming the Sacred Scriptures. It is certain that if we consider Christianity

not as a merely philosophical system, but as a religion which affords daily nourishment to the mind, and if we remember that all understandings are not equally capable of distinguishing, in these sacred books, that which is of all times and of all places, that which should ever be the guide of the mind to duty, and should fortify the will in its better resolutions, we shall readily confess that the Bible alone cannot be generally useful, and if we add that confessions of faith, apart from the Bible, but in accordance with its spirit, were in use before the canon of the Scriptures was formed, and that the church has continued in a very flourishing condition, we shall further confess that if the dogmatical value of the creeds of a church may be disputed, none but the enemies of the Gospel will exclaim against the principle of confessions of faith, since this principle alone, when in harmony with the truly religious wants of the time, can form a barrier against dangerous innovations. It is true that the promulgation of creeds in Germany did not prevent the numerous errors in the church, the phases of which we are called on to describe. Two reasons may be assigned for this: the successors of Luther and Melancthon were not equal to their vocation, as we shall soon see, and it may be safely said that the creeds were too numerous to serve as a standard around which all might rally, and that their many errors, never having been formally repudiated by the churches, it is natural to reject writings which, on some subjects, lay down a faith anti-biblical, and consequently irrational. Such an argument, however, cannot be said to attack the principle of a purely scriptural creed, with which all must sympathise who unite an elevated understanding with lively piety.\* Whatever solution of this vital question may be given by the development of the principles of the Reformation in the course of time, it is certain that the Formula of Concord, which cost so much trouble in drawing up, had been provoked by numerous objections to many points of the Lutheran doctrines, especially to those on the free-will of man and the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper; and that after it had been published, certain minds remained no less in a state of agitation. It was asked if the doctrines concerning original sin, free-will, and divine grace, had not been too hastily decided on, and if Luther might not have passed certain limits fixed by reason and Scripture; if it would not have been better had he confined himself to those more modified

\* Since the publication of the first edition of this work, Bretschneider has written a work on this subject, which I shall have occasion to mention. It is enough here to remark on the error into which this wise theologian has fallen, in rejecting all confessions of faith on account of the imperfections of the actual creeds.

expressions of his wise associate, which he seemed indirectly to sanction by his silence.

If Luther, then, with his severe Augustinianism, not only refrained from attacking one who entertained more moderate opinions, but even united himself with him in the strictest bond of friendship, why should a *Book of Agreement* be fixed upon, which would compel the numerous partisans of Melancthon (for the greater number of theologians had studied at Wittemberg), who adhered to the moderate doctrines, to renounce their cherished convictions? All this was said, but a party had been formed, under the shield of the great name of Luther, whose members were perfectly willing to exaggerate his principles, should that be necessary, in order to disturb the peace of Melancthon and his adherents. This party, which had at its head Flacius, strong in his character as a strict Lutheran, made strange exertions until it obtained the consecration of all Luther's most severe doctrines; and we have said that the Formula of Concord did not adopt the different readings of Melancthon.\* This triumph of the more extravagant party naturally suggests the question, what could have destroyed the influence of Melancthon's disciples? But we shall understand this fact, when we reflect that the professors of Wittemberg were under the influence of strict Lutheranism, and that custom, no less than their own talents, had made these men the advisers of the prince in everything relating to the new religion. Deprived thus of all access to the seat of power, and consequently excluded from the chairs of theology, naturally rather inactive, and allowing themselves to be easily imposed upon by the cutting dogmatism of those who had the talent of making a great noise, it is not very surprising that the timidity of the moderate yielded before audacity, and that the treaty of peace contained conditions entirely disadvantageous to them.

A grave historian refers to the want of address shown by the victorious party, especially as to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the manner most fitted to convince us of the narrowness of mind which directed them, while all those who belonged to the side of moderation professed, on this important question of Christian belief, the doctrine of the Confession of Augsburg, using even the same words. Their adversaries cavilled with them about words; and on the subject of *ubiquity*, which is not a scriptural expression, they sowed seeds of disunion which will prevent the church from becoming animated by charity, and will throw obstacles in the way of the formation of a large confederation

\* Plank, *History of Protestant Theology*, vol. iii. pp. 269-690 (*Geschichte der Prot. Theologie*).



of Protestant churches which would be so imposing to the common enemy.\*

It is true that Luther, in some polemical writings, employed this *ubiquity*, or universal presence of the body of Christ, as his great battle-steel ; but besides having consented that his own expressions should not be used in the Confession of Augsburg, it is said that in the latter part of his life he did not dwell so much on it, and seemed to wish to persuade his friends that if he retained this opinion, it was from habit rather than from well-founded conviction. Did he not declare, a hundred times, that he would give the right hand of fellowship to any one who would simply subscribe to the Confession of Augsburg ? Why, then, have his disciples shown themselves less conciliating than their master ? Thus it was, that instead of an union of all parties, on the ground of essential and clearly-revealed truths, the different sects either cherished ill-will, in the hope of a speedy revenge, or, becoming more decided, took refuge in another communion. This latter expedient was chosen by a great number of Protestant towns, which preferred liberty with the followers of Calvin, to a tyrannical agreement with the pretended disciples of Luther. It has been remarked that at the time of the publication of the Form of Concord, Bremen and Neustadt on the Hardt were the only towns which had voluntarily adopted the reformed doctrine on the subject of the Lord's Supper ; but scarcely thirty years had elapsed, ere nearly half of Protestant Germany was ranged under the standard of good sense and scriptural belief.† These crypto-Calvinists, as they were called by their adversaries, were only strengthened in their opposition by the attempt which was made to place them under the ban of the empire, by comparing them to the enemies of the Reformation. But the thirty years' war gave another direction to the minds of the people, and the two parties were left to seek peaceably, the one in the pure and simple Confession of Augsburg, the other in the Form of Concord, for support in this dreadful trial.

If it be true to affirm, from the pages of history, that the reformers undertook their task with the intention, not of destroying, but of changing and preserving, we cannot say that their immediate successors entered heartily into their noble purpose. Luther and Melancthon

\* Plank's *Geschichte der Prot. Theol.*, already quoted, contains the details of the dispute, which took the name of Synergism, as well as that on the nature of the Lord's Supper : the first, vol. i. book iii. 553-690 ; the second, book vi. ch. i.-xii., book viii. c. i.-xii.

† See another work by Plank, *On the History of Protestant Theology, from the Form of Concord to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century.* Götting. 1831. pp. 9-20.

were hardly in their graves before the theologians of their school set to work, though indirectly, to destroy the fruits of their masters' labours.\*

Seeing the reformed religion legally established in the country, and no longer having anything to fear from the thunderbolts of Rome, it was against the doctrines which had been with so much difficulty deduced from the Bible, to be placed in opposition to the Catholic dogmas, and, above all, against the dissent from the Confession of Augsburg in the reformed camp, that the Lutheran theologians directed their powers. Certainly they remained faithful to the fundamental principles of Protestantism, of which the ancient ideas of inspiration and revelation were the essential elements, but they entered into refinements on the connexion of grace with the free will of man; on the nature of election and predestination, and the restrictions to be imposed on that doctrine; on the ubiquity in the Lord's Supper, and the infidelity of the reformed party in denying it. On these questions did the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries spend all their talents and intelligence. When we add that the churches in general resounded with the same discussions, we shall pity the people who were thus placed under the yoke of cavilling; but their pious disposition had caused them to find a spiritual nourishment in reading the Bible, which they prized above all else, and the princes, notwithstanding the avarice of which Luther so often and so bitterly complains, had granted some of the riches of which the Reformation had despoiled the ancient church, for different establishments of public utility, and especially for schools; and the results of this to knowledge were of no little importance.

We will give some specimens of the skill of these preachers, which will enable our readers to judge how much edification could be derived from homilies or discourses entirely destitute of moral or religious tendencies. One of the preachers divides the subject-matter of his sermon into four parts: the first portion treats of the difference between Lutheranism and Popery; the second of that existing between the church of Christ and the Zwinglians; the third is devoted to a disputation with the Schwenkfeldians; and the fourth is directed against the Anabaptists.

\* Luther was born in 1483, at Eisleben, where he died in 1546; Melancthon, born at Wittemberg in 1497, died there in 1560. A piece of paper, on which he had been noting down his thoughts, was found on a table by the bedside of Melancthon after his death. On the right were these words: "Thou shalt come into the light: thou shalt see the Son of God; thou shalt learn to know what thou hast not been able to comprehend in this life." On the left: "Thou shalt renounce sin; thou shalt be delivered from all troubles, and a *rabie theologorum*." See *Vitæ German-Philosophorum*, by Adam, p. 934.



How edifying must all this have been ! and yet the author was one of the great lights of his church, one who took a prominent part in the discussion of those problems, the solution of which was so earnestly desired by governments for the sake of public tranquillity ; he was that Jacob Andreä, whose discourses were published towards the end of the sixteenth century, who was one of the authors of the famous Form of Concord, and who drew up the correspondence carried on between the theologians of Tübingen, and Jeremy, patriarch of Constantinople, for the purpose of effecting a union of the Greek and Lutheran churches. One of his works, printed at Frankfort in 1595, is entitled *Methodus Concionandi*, and it is said that the precepts it contains are much better than the examples afforded by the conduct of the author.

Artomedes, another Lutheran preacher, commences in the following manner a sermon on the Lord's Supper : " There are two furious armies of devils incarnate, disputing about the Lord's Supper ; on one side the Papists, on the other the haughty and captious Calvinists. Our miserable pagan, Ovid, is a better theologian than any of these Calvinists," &c. &c. And still more offensive expressions follow, in a style truly disgusting.\* The introductions to these sermons generally consisted of a grammatical explanation of the text, followed by a noisy discussion, which they had the hardihood to term a practical application. I shall quote only one other example. It is a discourse of the preacher Hermann, a Silesian by birth, of which Zaccheus is the subject. The text is, " Zaccheus was a little man," a subject, we see, of immense interest, which he divides thus : " We consider, first, the word *he*, which acquaints us with the nature of the person ; secondly, the word *was*, which will teach us the frailty of life ; thirdly, the word *little*, which tells us of the personal appearance of Zaccheus." Now, let us see the practical application to his audience made by the preacher. " Zaccheus," says he, " ought to teach us in the first place what great variety there is in the works of God, since he takes care of the little, whose comforter he is." (He does not say whether he means only the little in body, or those of whom Jesus speaks when he declares that the kingdom of heaven is for little children, and such as resemble them.) " Finally, the history of Zaccheus should teach us the necessity of compensating for our personal defects by our virtues." If these people were professed Lutherans, they took good care not to study the art of preaching in the sermons of their master, many of which, especially those in his *Kirchen-Postillen*, may serve as models for all ages. When we see these aberrations of the human mind, we naturally ask what were the

\* The sermons of Artomedes were published at Königsberg in 1590.

opinions of these theologians on that noble power of thought and perception which they so miserably misused. Daniel Hoffmann, professor in the University of Helmstadt, and his disciples, will reply, that it is necessary to beware of employing reason on theological subjects. I imagine that these writers, who were not deficient in ability, were led to this invective against human reason only by the eccentricities of contemporaneous theologians, and not having among them a Melancthon to guide them in the way which he so gloriously pursued, they failed to arrive, as he did, at theological truth by means of a wise philosophy which he had divested of its barren subtilties.

Hoffmann, whom his learned adversary, Hutter, acknowledges to have possessed considerable erudition, begins his attack on the reasoning powers by a dissertation in which he plainly declares that human reason is the work of Satan and of the flesh, and he adds, that as theology ought to have nothing in common with it, its use should be entirely forbidden in the Universities.\* This language was too crude not to wound some ears, and the professors of philosophy in the same University of Helmstadt exerted themselves successfully to compel Hoffmann, if not to retract, at least to modify his language. Here was another abuse of reason, to pretend to convince an opponent by threatening him with the arm of the civil law. It appears, however, that the iron chains in which their minds were held by the symbolic books did not allow the adversaries of Hoffmann to oppose his doctrine with success; though his theories were attacked by the University of Wittemberg, history does not record the triumph of that famous seat of learning.† Hoffmann, on the contrary, found adherents who warmly defended his principles, who showed much sense in their works against the so-called human reason advocated by the University of Wittemberg, and succeeded in awakening the interest of all who wished to see revived in men's hearts, not the love of disputation, but divine charity. Of this number were Schelling, whose

\* *De Deo et Christo*, published 1598. He had published another treatise in 1581, whose title proves its moderation—*Qui sit veræ ac sobriæ Philosophiæ in Theologia usus*.

† A writer, whose opinions always have great weight with all who respect knowledge, joined to a noble character, viz., Plank, thinks that Hoffmann's theory may have resulted from his consideration of the famous sophism of Luther, that what is true in philosophy may be false in theology. Hoffmann says, if philosophy is the enemy of religion and piety, the more human reason follows the guidance of philosophy, the more will it also become the enemy of theology. But I am still inclined to think that the vain arguments of the theologians of his own day had the most influence in driving him to excess. Compare *The History of Protestant Theology, from the Form of Concord to the Present Time* (*Geschichte der Prot. Theologie, von der Concordienformel*). Göttingen, 1831. p. 9.

principal work has a title which alone is worth a dissertation,\* and the learned counsellor Angelius of Werdenhagen, who attacked the pretensions of reason only to prove the predominance of a quality of the heart, viz., sentiment in philosophy; but he was unconsciously carried so far by his imagination, that instead of exercising a real influence over religious minds, he is remembered only as an enthusiast, whom a just appreciation of reason might have rendered illustrious.

It was otherwise with the humble shoemaker of Gorlitz, who, deeply grieved to see the church of Christ decaying under the influence of those who pretended to be its vigilant supporters, gave utterance to the feelings which oppressed his heart. Too truly pious to enter into disputation, and too deeply imbued with the Christian spirit not to respect what the cold orthodoxy of his day regarded as essentially worthy of respect, he prayed to him who opens the hearts and the minds of mortals, to instruct him in the truth, and his prayer was answered in his own heart. The different writings which he published show a high development of the moral sense, as well as a profound conception of divine things in their author. They certainly manifest some want of intellectual culture, but in the eyes of the serious man this deficiency is amply compensated by the richness of the thoughts and the originality of the expressions. We see from them that he was early initiated into the mystical language of Paracelsus, Weigel, and Schwenkfeld; without adopting all their fancies, he was content to draw out from the Book of Revelation the divine fire hidden under the dead letter. Thus, for example, Böhme did not admit the doctrine of the Trinity as preserved by the confessions of faith of his church, but it is impossible not to feel warmed by his ideas of the Divinity, when we find them thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Scriptures, meditation on which occupied all his leisure hours. Without departing from the spirit of the Bible, all his efforts were directed towards the production, according to his means, of some better aliment for minds eager for truth; and from the time when this extraordinary man began to write, down to the present day, his name, notwithstanding the anathemas of some consistories, has ever been venerated by those who, willing to judge for themselves, have examined his works.†

\* *Ecclesiæ metaphysicæ visitatio.....Ad unguem demonstrans, quo ejuratæ impietatis vanitatisque deploratæ metaphysici doctores delebuntur, ad metaphysicas speculationes mysteria cœlitus patefacta violentissime detorquendo.* 1616.

† "The unknown philosopher," as Claude de Saint-Martin called himself, has translated into French the *Rising Aurora* and the *Three Principles of Böhme*. Those who wish to become better acquainted with the life of this wise German

Notwithstanding this general torpidity in the Christian church, there were still some learned men, who, on account of their knowledge, deserve to be honourably mentioned, and it is by no means with justice that the Rationalists, to excuse their own bold flights, charge Germany with having been a prey to barbarism from the death of Melancthon till the appearance of Baumgarten and Semler. When such names as Calow, Musæus, Osiander, Calixtus, and the two Carpzows, can be mentioned, such an accusation must fall to the ground, since the works of all these writers are in the hands of those who wish to form an idea of Lutheran orthodoxy. Nor must we forget to mention Chytræus, whose real name was Rochof, and whose first wish it was to prove that Melancthon had, not without reason, distinguished him above his other disciples; Paul Gerard, whose hymns will bear a comparison with the best of Luther's compositions of the same class; Chemnitz, whose *Examen Concilii Tridentini* is always read with benefit, and who paved the way for modern Synopses by his *Harmonia Quatuor Evangelistarum*; Flacius, famous for his *Clavis Scripturæ Sacræ*, and for his valuable edition of the Greek New Testament; Brentz, whose seven folio volumes show the abundance of matter offered by Scriptural Interpretation; and Flassius, the superintendent of Gotha, whose *Sacred Philology*, though indeed revised by the editors, has been reprinted even in the present day.\* The field of history alone was in a state of complete sterility; if we except Sleidan's *History of the Reformation*, there is no work deserving mention. The warmth of controversy prevented theologians from indulging in meditation, and when they did employ themselves on works of history, it was only for the purpose of aggression. For this aim were composed the writings of J. Gerhard, the haughty antagonist of Cardinal Bellarmine. I have mentioned the name only of Calixtus; but he ought to be more particularly noticed on account of the aversion in which he was held by his colleagues from his *Syncretism*, which they did not understand. It was not founded, like that which has subsequently prevailed, on a silence on the subject of the difference of doctrines, but on a common faith in the fundamental principles of Christianity, contained alike in the Confessions of Faith of Rome, of Geneva, and of Wittenberg. The works of Calixtus are not only worthy of the public eulogium pronounced on them by Bossuet, the strongest adversary of the Reformation, but they show also that their author might have become a skilful historian, had he

should read his *Biography*, by F. de Fouqué; and, for an account of his principles, the *Christian Gnosis*, by Baur, pp. 557-611.

\* The third edition was issued at Leipzig in 1818.

not been interrupted in his labours by a blind persecution.\* We ought, in fact, to consider history as a mirror, in which are reflected the providential events of the times of which it treats, and not as a field of battle for the contests of parties. He showed that the reason why parties attacked each other with so much violence was, that they did not yet understand the use of sound criticism on matters of explanation and biblical exegesis. If he did not see the results of his labours, it cannot be said that they were futile. We may presume that his vigorous attacks on the gloomy dogmatism of his adversaries prepared the way for the movement of Spener and his disciples, who, going to the opposite extreme, had not less influence in overthrowing some strong pillars of the Lutheran edifice.

Some other theologians, however, such as Strigel, Selnecker, and Chemnitz, had pursued the path pointed out by Melancthon, when he approached the opinions of Erasmus on the question of human liberty. The first of these was peculiarly hated for his opinions on the Lord's Supper, though they were similar to those which are professed by all Lutheran pastors of the present day, and in which they resemble the reformers. Like Selnecker, he prefixed to his work an introduction, in

\* The son of this celebrated professor of Helmstadt observes in a preface to the *Epitome Theologiæ Moralis*, that of all his father's opinions, the one which attracted most animadversion was this, "That in the true church there might be members whose faith was imperfect, who would however be saved, if they united with this imperfect faith, pure morals and an innocent life." If it were not so, why should Christians so often pray, as did the apostles, *Domine adauge nobis fidem*? And yet it was this opinion that exposed Calixtus to the most atrocious calumnies of his enemies. I should be ashamed to report all that I have read of this controversy between Synergism and Syncretism, but I must give one example to show that the *rabies theologorum* of which Melancthon complained is the same in all ages, and that it delights in attacking those more especially inclined to the cause of moderation, charity, and peace.

On the pretext that Calixtus had travelled in France and Italy, his pious adversaries accused him of having derived his spirit of conciliation from the taverns and bad places which he there frequented. They added, that it was nothing for him to be a heretic, that he was fallen lower than the devil (*diabolo pejor*), that the term honesty conveyed no meaning to his mind, and that it was no wonder he had renounced the Lutheran doctrine, since no Lutherans were to be found in the dens of debauchery and drunkenness which he had frequented in Italy and France. (*Mirum non est quod in Gallorum et Italorum tabernis, vinariis atque fornicibus invenire Lutheranos non potuit.*) See the work of a professor of Wittenberg, named Strauch, against Calixtus, *Vindiciæ Consensus Repetiti*, p. 373. It is true that the patience of Calixtus was exhausted, and he obtained from the tribunals a condemnation of his antagonist as an infamous calumniator; but Strauch was supported by the Lutheran Universities of Leipzig, Wittenberg, and Jena!!



which the questions of Scriptural Revelation, and of Christian teaching, are methodically set forth.\* It was the same impulse which gave rise to the work of the learned disputant, Chemnitz, who, in his controversy with Rome, seemed to wish only to develop in a spirit of moderation the theological ideas of Melancthon; and also to the treatise on Christian doctrine by Leyser, in which, for the first time, we find united the history of opinions with the opinions themselves. We must not omit to mention Huther, who laboured so indefatigably as much against the opponents of Lutheranism, as to establish the Confession of Augsburg on a firm foundation, though departing in the strictest sense of Lutheranism from the direction which I have just pointed out. His *Concordia Concors* was intended to vindicate the honour of the Form of Concord against the *Concordia Discors* of Rudolph Hospinian,† and it succeeded for a time in so doing. We know that his *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum*, written with the express intention of throwing into the shade the moderate opinions of Melancthon and his school, was admitted into many of the Universities, and there enjoyed unbounded authority during more than a century. But the giant of the Protestant church was that J. Gerhard mentioned above, first the superintendent at Coburg, and afterwards professor at Jena. The title of his work well expresses its object.‡ Indeed, he was not satisfied with setting forth the doctrines and the moral system of Christianity. His book contains also a lively controversy and a history of doctrine. We may well say that it is a work of great patience and learning, and a most useful book of reference on subjects connected with religious literature in that day.

Up to this time theologians had adopted the synthetical method in the explanation and development of Christian doctrines; that is to say, they proceeded from the cause to the effect: and it is very remarkable that from the time when this system was abandoned, in order to pursue the analytical method, Lutheranism began to decline. Calixtus was the author of this change, and he also set the example in his writings,

\* Melancthon had said, "Concurrunt tres causæ bonæ actionis, verbum Dei, Spiritus Sanctus ac humana voluntas assentiens nec repugnans verbo Dei." Strigel repeated, in a semi-pelagian tone, "Tres sint causæ efficientes conversionis: Deus, verbum et voluntas hominis." Strigel's work, which is entitled *Loci Theologici*, was published in four volumes by Pezel, 1581-85. The work of Chemnitz was only a commentary on the *Loci Communes* of Melancthon.

† This Discordant Concord was published by Hospinian, at Zurich, in 1607, and at Geneva, in 1678, fol.

‡ *Locorum Theolog. cum pro adstruenda veritate, tum pro destruenda quorumvis contradicentium falsitate.* Jena, 1610, 9 vols.; and it was afterwards published in 20 vols. at Tübingen, 1762-81.



of separating morals from doctrine, and treating of them apart. We cannot, however, perceive that Calixtus in his moral essay has taken one step in advance in this most important department of religious knowledge. After his death, if morals were spoken of at all, it was only in a negative manner, by the authors of some writings against the Jesuits, who were beginning to make their appearance in the world. Though such writers as Hollaz,\* Quenstedt,† Carpov,‡ and several others who flourished in the seventeenth century, were not without the talents necessary for the cultivation of this useful branch of theology; yet Schömer is the only one who can, by his *Specimen theologiæ moralis*, advance any claims to notice in this field. But how could those who violated charity, one of the fundamental principles of Christian morality, be competent to write on the subject, and lay down its precepts for others to follow? Theologians did quite right, therefore, in neglecting this subject; especially if we may believe what Budæus says of his colleagues. “There was so great a difference,” wrote he, “between the morality which they spoke of, and that which they practised, that it was the general belief, that those who wrote on the subject did so from the desire for fame or from the hope of gain.”§

\* We have by Hollaz, *Examen Theolog. Acroam.* 1707. The second edition, with additions by Rom. Teller, is of 1750.

† *Theologia didactico-polemica.* The last edition was published at Leipzig in 1715.

‡ *Theologia revelata*, &c. Frankfort, 1737-49. 3 vols.

§ Budæus, *Isagoge*, p. 588.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE STATE OF THEOLOGY IN GERMANY FROM THE DEATH OF  
MELANCTHON TO THE TIME OF SPENER.

AFTER having praised the works of some theologians, it is necessary to show how the most influential of the time treated the question which is the touchstone of Rationalism. The learned labours of Reuchlin on the Old Testament, and those no less learned of Erasmus and Beza on the New, are well known. By them a strong impulse was given to the study of the ancient languages, and to the philological explanation of the Bible, when time, place, custom, and other circumstances, call for such explanations. It was necessary to pursue these studies, with a view of extending and improving them, instead of labouring only for the Confession of Augsburg, and thus displaying, though together with great learning, much prejudice and utter ignorance of sound criticism. But the theologians of that period could not understand this. Their strict Supernaturalism was only anti-Popery or anti-Calvinism, and provided they found in the Scriptures a word to throw at the head of a Catholic, or of one of the reformed party, with the view of breaking it for the glory of the God of the Lutherans, they troubled themselves little as to whether their system were approved by enlightened reason. They affirmed on the subject of inspiration, that every sentence, every word, and even the punctuation, of the Bible was the work of the Holy Spirit; and they supported this rash declaration by the words of Jesus, the meaning of which is so profoundly spiritual, that not one tittle of the Scripture can perish. Hollaz further maintained that no one, without being guilty of blasphemy, can doubt that the style in which the Scriptures are written is worthy of the divine majesty, and, therefore, that it is an insult to the divine majesty to seek in it for solecisms and barbarisms.\* Yet Hollaz could not have been ignorant of the

\* He proves his theory thus: "The style of an omniscient God cannot be accused of containing anything foolish or barbarous; now the style of the Scriptures is the style of God, therefore," &c. It must be acknowledged that it requires great self-denial to present such weak arguments. This one has more force—"The inspiration of the words was necessary in order that they might ex-

difficulties experienced by the Stephens's and by Erasmus in making choice of a text worthy the confidence of the universal church; and he may also have been acquainted with some of the numerous diversities of reading, the list of which has been so greatly increased in our times by Griesbach and by Scholz. The same narrow spirit is to be found in the allegations of Gerard, Chemnitz, and even of Calow; and many go to such an extent that they weaken the force of historical proofs in order to establish the authenticity of the canon, thinking that thus they can better deduce thence the intrinsic proofs of the divinity of Scripture. We could have understood them had they been content with saying that as God has given the Word only as food for the heart of man, so the heart should also take a good part in its interpretation. But such was not their language, and therefore were their pretensions absurd. Perhaps they considered only the weak side of some historical testimony, and did not see, or at least did not think, enough of those points in which it cannot be assailed, critical knowledge having at that time made but little progress; and it is possible that they thought to prevent subsequent attacks by fortifying themselves behind proofs which the conscience alone can appreciate. Though the Christian may say with a French writer, "The majesty of Scripture astonishes me, its holiness speaks to my heart," he must also be able, if called upon, to give an account of his faith, and this he will never be able to do if he allows himself to be ensnared by historical and critical pretensions. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of his labours, Luther had found time to point out to his successors a vast field for cultivation, that of Explanation and Sacred Criticism, one which they ought to have entered upon the more willingly, since the reformed party, in the persons of Theodore, of Beza, and the Stephens's, had already broken up the ground on the subjects connected with the history of the text of Scripture.\* But the Lutheran theologians, content with seeing their favourite doctrines enthroned in the Universities, beheld nothing but through their medium, and all their expositions of Holy Writ were founded on their polemical dogmatism.

As long as the Form of Concord held sovereign authority, with it must exist that sort of interpretation and criticism which alone could

press the true meaning of the Holy Spirit." All who know the difficulties of making a good and true translation will confess that it would require, indeed, a sort of divine intuition to give precisely the thought of another.

\* Luther's writings on the subjects of Explanation and Sacred Criticism are in the course of being published separately, under the title, *Lutheri opera exegetica Latina*, curavit M. St. Th. Elsperger. The nine first volumes appeared at Erlangen, 1842.

maintain it. It was absolutely necessary to find in the Scriptures support for the doctrine officially recognised, and hence free inquiry was forbidden by the very nature of things, the circle of studies having been strangely contracted by that multitude of confessions which were opposed to all research. The only ambition of these theologians was to teach as, according to them, Luther must have taught, and they employed all their powers in inventing a new scholastic system which should place their master's instructions beyond the reach of attack. Explanation thus became, like church history, a demonstration of received doctrine, instead of serving to throw new light on the subject. It was nothing more than the tool of a party which laboured rather for the interests of a system than for those of religion. Religion had nothing to do with these lucubrations of the Lutheran theology, which had thus fallen into such unskilful hands, and if the divine word, drawn from under the bushel, had not acted as a preservative, all these subtleties would have had the effect of converting reform into an instrument of demoralisation.\*

Nevertheless the principles advanced by the reformers in order to place their doctrines on a base which they thought indestructible were scrupulously respected by the Concordists, and the learned Mosheim may be justly accused of error when† he states that not only Luther but also his immediate successors admitted the doctrine of inspiration only in the matter and not in the language in which it is conveyed; since Musæus, who had, in 1644, maintained a theory that the inspiration of the words was doubtful, and could not be proved, was obliged to retract. Calow, however, was the first sensibly to modify this mode of thinking.

A strict Lutheran, opposed to all agreement with whatever differed in the least from the Confession of Augsburg, Calow, a professor and superintendent at Wittenberg, had already signalised himself in the controversy against the syncretism of Calixtus, who was weakly defended by the University of Helmstadt.‡ But the work which relates more espe-

\* The principal authors of Lutheran doctrinal works were, after Melancthon, Chemnitz, Hutter, Bechmann, Quenstedt, Hollaz, Budæus, Gerhard, Calixtus, Hulsenius, Calow, König, Auenstadt, Baier, Baumgarten, Carpow, and Walch. After them came a series of doctrinal systems, which hold an intermediate place between the decided Rationalism that succeeded, and the narrow Supernaturalism which preceded, them. The authors of these were, Morus, Döderlein, Reinhard, Augusti, Ammon, Schott, Bretschneider, &c.

† *Elementa Theologiæ Dogmaticæ*, i. p. 120.

‡ Why must history be obliged to record of Calow, fits of passion which ought to have been incompatible with the learning that he possessed? Speaking of the University of Helmstadt, which endeavoured to support Calixtus against

cially to our subject is his *Doctrinal System*, in which is given a complete theory of revelation. According to this theologian, the word revelation may be understood in three different senses:—1st, In a general manner, as signifying every act of God on man, in order to lead him to the knowledge of religious and moral truths, whether the Deity does this by the means of nature, reason, or the Sacred Scriptures; 2nd, In a peculiar manner, as signifying an express manifestation of the Divine Will, which Will is set forth in the Scriptures; 3rd, In a still more peculiar manner, as expressing an immediate action of God on the sacred writers by his Holy Spirit. Hence it follows, that all revelation comes necessarily from God, whose aim always is to instruct men in those things which concern their salvation, and to each of his revelations a peculiar inspiration is joined, which makes its purpose clear. Hence it follows also that all the teachings of every revelation are true and certain; for it would be absurd to suppose that God would reveal that which is false. Certainly, Calow, in this amalgamation of different notions on the subject of revelation, did not see the inferences which Rationalism might draw from it. God, said he, never does any thing useless; therefore, if one revelation suffices to teach man all that it is necessary he should know, in order to accomplish his destiny, why should we suppose others? Yet Calow, whose orthodoxy was unsuspected, insists upon the immediate as well as the mediate revelation, maintaining the last however, in so far as made manifest by divine messengers, in the ancient acceptance of the word. He dwells also on the different characters of the vehicles through which revelation is conveyed. Sometimes, says he, they may be beyond the powers of reason and of nature, and it may sometimes happen that they are in accordance with our own experience. In the latter case man has the right of examining and judging them; in the former, he ought to receive them without examination.

As to inspiration, he considers it in its principle as an act of God who reveals, and in its form as the revealed word. Inspiration is with him a definite reality which the word of God has constituted such in the most profound sense, which distinguishes it from anything purely human; it is the more necessary to maintain this position, as every distinction of the word places, according to the subject, the human reason in the highest rank, in presuming that the contents of revela-

his furious adversaries, he actually said that, in so acting, the colleagues of Calixtus had spread abroad in the world the excretions of Satan (*excrementa Satanae*). In a programme of one of his courses of lectures this shameful expression is found.



tion are made known as a gift (p. 68). Calow speaks afterwards of the connexion between revelation and inspiration, saying that the latter expresses the most profound concentration of the idea of the former.\*

Such were the men who, having received the inheritance of Luther and Melancthon, far from repairing the defects which may have existed in the principles laid down by those skilful, but not infallible founders of German Protestantism, allowed those principles, on the contrary, to become weakened in their hands, by neglecting to apply them to any useful purpose, but employing them to undermine the edifice with the defence of which they were charged. Melancthon in the later years of his life had raised the philosophy of Aristotle from the contempt into which it had fallen through the sarcasms of Luther, only to make it serve as a useful auxiliary to theology, and not to transform it into a new scholastic system without taste and without character, still less to confound it with a philosophy too audacious in its pretensions. Notwithstanding this example, subsequent theologians did not rise to one great and luminous idea; they received and imparted only a narrow and timid education, together with irrational instructions, placed, however, under the sanction of oaths and censures. Such a state of things could only paralyse the human mind in the higher classes of society, while its tendency must have been to weaken among the people the feeling of simple unaffected piety as well as the moral sentiment.

Zeal grew cold, and life became extinct in the bosom of the Lutheran church; the letter indeed remained, but the spirit was dead; and though an attempt was made to revive it in the controversy of the syncretists, it soon relapsed into its former lethargy from very weariness of dispute. We are now about to see what efforts were made by some good men to prolong the life of this Lutheranism, already so much diseased.

\* Vol. I. ch. iii. sec. 1, p. 280, seqq., of the *Systema locor. theologicorum sacra potiss. scriptura et antiquitate, necnon advers. confession. doctrinam, praxin et controuv. fidei pertractationem exhibens*. Witt. 1655-77. 12 pp. *Theologia positiva*. Witt. 1682.



## CHAPTER VII.

PROPAGATION OF PIETISM—SPENER, HIS SYSTEM—HIS INFLUENCE  
IN GERMANY.

THERE appeared, at this time, a man who, deeply afflicted by the state of the Christian church in his native land, resolved to consecrate the whole of his life to its improvement. We may say that his influence in Germany was very great, if we take into account not only those who readily acknowledged the benefits which they derived from his zeal, but also those of his adversaries whom he compelled to give a better direction to their labours; for when opposition does exist, from whatever side it comes, it never fails to produce good fruits itself, and to draw them forth from other quarters.

The nature of pietism is so often misunderstood, and it has been so calumniated by its adversaries, that a somewhat detailed account of this opposition to the Lutheran theology made by men on whose good faith suspicion is not allowed to rest, cannot be considered superfluous in this place.

✓ Spener, born in Alsace, in 1635, studied at Strasburg and Basle. In the first of these towns his master was the celebrated Dannhauer, and in the second the learned orientalist Buxtorf. The dissertations which he published, whether during his residence in Switzerland, or at Tübingen, where he afterwards settled, or at Strasburg, where he at a later period held the office of pastor, and at the same time gave theological lessons to the academy of that town; these dissertations, I say, treating as they do of history, geography, logic, and metaphysics, prove the variety of his knowledge. It was not, therefore, from ignorance of the antiquity of the plans pursued in the schools, that he afterwards contracted the circle of labour to which he considered that the theologian ought to confine himself, but because he thought that thus he should be more likely to obtain the blessing of heaven upon his work.

It was soon seen, however, that he reserved his best powers for the study of purely scriptural theology, the decline of which struck him as forcibly as did the diminution of Christian zeal in the mass of

believers, and we will show how he endeavoured to realize his project after meditating on it for some time. Full of humility, and little caring for the celebrity generally belonging to the part of the reformer,\* the first measures which he took were grave and serious conversations with persons of all ranks and of all professions, whom he thought he could lead to entertain the ideas which he wished to propagate, and afterwards the circulation in this little society of friends, of writings fitted to confirm them in their resolutions. He began his pious efforts by recommending the *Postilla Evangelica* of Arndt, in a Preface which was afterwards printed separately under the title of *Pia Desideria*. Arndt, a pious man, if ever there was one, had been persecuted by his contemporaries and branded as a heretic, for having been, some time previous, one of those rare preachers who preferred to lead the members of their flocks to a Christian life, to making them hearers of polemical discussions.† Such was the fate of Spener also; but as it has been well said by his friend and colleague Francke, the venerable Vincent de Paul of Germany, experience teaches us that whenever men employ themselves seriously in the name of religion, in the moral improvement of their kind, they are soon taxed with fanaticism or hypocrisy, and none of those epithets are spared which may cast ridicule on their labours.‡

\* He himself says, on this subject, “ I will not allow myself to entertain the foolish idea that I can come forward as a reformer of the church; for I remember my weakness, and that I have received neither the powers nor the wisdom necessary for such an undertaking. Let me enjoy only the power of uniting my feeble voice with those which encourage others to undertake a reformation which the Lord will know how to excite.” This sincere modesty merited the confidence of every honest heart and elevated mind, notwithstanding the defects presented by his ideas on the subject of the religious sciences.

† Jean Arndt, born at Ballenstädt, in 1555, filled the pastoral office, successively, at that town, at Quedlinburg, Brunswick, and Eisleben, and died in 1631, at Zell, as superintendent of the principality of Luneburg. In German families, where piety still finds a home, his *True Christianity* is never wanting, and it is continually reprinted. One of the heroes of Lutheranism of that time, viz., L. Osiander, declared in his *Bedenken gegen das wahre Christenthum* (*Reflections against True Christianity*),—the very title of the book is its condemnation,—that the writings of Arndt contained the remains of all heresies, and the subtle preachers of Brunswick called them poison. Their declamations have passed away, and the noble efforts of Arndt, who is sometimes called the Fenelon of Germany, have not ceased to do good to devout hearts.

‡ See an excellent biography of Francke, by Guerike, which appeared at Halle, in 1827, under this title, indicative of the circumstances which led to its publication; Aug. Herm. Francke: *Eine Denkschrift, Säcularfeier seines Todes*.

We know, indeed, that the name of *Pietist* given to Spener and those whom he influenced, was invented by the theologians themselves, who could find no better argument to refute him. However that may be, the influence of Spener became still greater when he explained his principles of exposition, which agreed with his ideas of practical Christianity. This took place after he had resided a long time in the cities of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Berlin, and Dresden, and had there established those pious conferences known by the name of *Collegia pietatis*, whence the word *pietist* is derived, and where there was no intention of forming a separate church,\* but only of obtaining edification which the temples of the ruling church did not afford. He supported with all his credit the *Colloquia philobiblica*, which Paul Gerhard and Francke had also endeavoured to establish, for the purpose of leading back the mind to the practical study of the Bible, and of drawing it away from those idle questions which, placed indiscriminately under the sanction of the Bible, were entirely foreign to it. This is not the place to record the troubles into which Spener's projects of theological reform plunged him; it would withdraw me too far from my original design, which is to give what may be considered a general view of his ideas on theology and Christian life.†

The principal point of discussion between Spener and his adversaries was whether his doctrine were a new heresy arising, as did so many others, from the liberty of inquiry secured by Protestantism. This question was discussed in a great number of works, and the general conclusion was, that the opinions of Spener on regeneration or new birth, as well as on conversion and sanctification, did not differ sensibly from

\* It was some time after Spener that a man estimable for every good quality endeavoured to form a community distinct from the established churches, and succeeded beyond his hopes. I speak of the Count of Zinzendorf, a pupil of Francke, who, seconded by the enlightened zeal of the Baron of Wattewille, founded the Society of Moravians, among whom practical Christianity has always been placed above the speculations of the intellect.

† A fuller account of Spener will be found in his life, written by one of his friends, the Baron of Canstein: however small may be the wish of the reader to become acquainted with the debates which his reforms excited, he will not consult without benefit either the *History of Religious Controversies*, by Walch, vol. i. p. 540, or the work of W. Hossbach, entitled, "*Spener and his Times*." Berlin, 1828. He will also find it useful to read a biography of Spener, in the *Journal of Edification*, published at Paris, by M. le Pasteur Martin. I there find quoted these words of Spener: "The Reformation commenced by Luther is far from being completed, as far as it regards life and morality." And the journalist adds,— "Words full of sense and truth, which show how clearly Spener saw into the depths of things and of the minds of men at that time."—*Le Disciple de Jesus Christ* (*The Disciple of Jesus Christ*, vol. ii. p. 53).

the orthodox dogmas, and that the plan which he pursued for the establishment of his doctrines was much more to be feared by the Lutheran church than the doctrines themselves. In his *Pia Desideria*, and afterwards in his *General Knowledge of God*, he had already maintained that divine things ought to be discussed only by men imbued with the Spirit of God, also that the true theologian should be a regenerate man; for unless he be such, theology is no more divine but purely human wisdom. He further maintains that in order to arrive at truth, we must go only to the source of all truth, and consequently that we ought not to believe one article of the creeds, unless we know that it is clearly taught in the Word of God; that we should not inquire whether Luther or any other theologian professed a doctrine, whether the symbolical books admit or reject it, but should regard the Bible alone as being able to solve all religious and moral questions. As we see, the fault of Spener's system was its too great simplicity; it confounded, moreover, two distinct things,—the knowledge of facts, otherwise called science, and the piety common to the theologian and the layman; things which should be closely united, but whose separate existence we can conceive to be possible. It also confounded the internal proofs of the divinity of the Scripture with the indisputable evidence afforded in its favour by history and tradition. We are not therefore surprised that men of merit joined with the often ill-judging crowd in opposing with acrimony a system which attacked many of their convictions.

Perhaps the signal for the invective launched against Spener by several theologians was given by his attacks on the confessors of Lutheranism (*Beichtväter*); a ridiculous institution, the existence of which was in many places known only by the tax gathered for it. Be that as it may, we invite those who would still persist, notwithstanding the indisputable evidence of history, in regarding Spener and his friends as the enemies of science and philosophy, to read these words of one whose testimony may well be received on such a subject,—“ . . . they completely justified themselves, and they could not be convicted either of this error or of the heresies which were imputed to them.” It is Leibnitz who speaks thus categorically of the pietists.\*

The weak points of the system which explain, if they do not excuse, the accusations of indifference brought against its advocates, are the distinction between the essential and non-essential in point of doctrine,—a distinction which opens a wide gate to liberty of thought,—and its unfeigned contempt for confessions of faith in general, when it should have been content with showing which of these confessions is not in

\* *Essai de Théodicée*, vol. i. p. 57, edit. of Berlin, 1840.

harmony with the true faith. How could a church exist without some standard around which all its members might rally and recognise each other? The Bible alone is not a standard, unless we find that the thousand and one colours with which it may be decked by the human understanding may serve as marks of recognition. In principle, confessions are part of the essence of every religious community; we must only endeavour to purify them, and to make them conformable to the eternal rights of reason and of faith. Thus the weak side of Spener and his friends was the liberty inherent in Protestantism, by which, as intelligent and moral beings, they pretended to show that symbolical books were unnecessary. Their adversaries, on the contrary, affirmed that these books were irrevocable, and if not immediately inspired as the sacred writings, were at least *mediately* so, and therefore indisputable.\* But Lutheranism, seeing a breach made in the edifice of its faith, could not pardon it. It was, indeed, by this breach that a class of Rationalists entered, to facilitate the invasion of the whole edifice by others. A strict Lutheran of our time, who does not conceal his sympathy for the character of Spener, remarks, however, that though his principles attacked with justice the dead orthodoxy of his day, they would have been devoid of meaning before a living orthodoxy.† But Spener questioned whether the Lutheran organisation of the church could ever produce that orthodoxy full of life which is the object of the wishes of the learned professor of Halle. Let us say, then, in praise of this good man, that though several governments, misled by the denunciations of Lutheran orthodoxy, committed the mistake of issuing edicts against what they believed to be a public pest, though such writers as Mayer, of Hamburg, who by his political intrigues proved still better than by his writings, that he was a stranger to a peaceable and Christian life,‡ and

\* This is the opinion of Mylius, Hutter, and even of Hollaz. "It is dangerous," says the last, "to call the symbolical books *human writings* (*humana scripta appellare*) without adding some explanatory word."

† Guerike, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 3rd edit. Halle, 1838. p. 1072. Another writer on church history, who is to Protestant Germany what the Abbé Fleury is to Catholic France, viz., an exact historian, free from prejudice, somewhat diffuse, and, above all, quoting largely from the authors of whom he speaks, remarks also very justly, that even if Spener had not distinctly expressed his opinions against the symbolical books, yet all his principles tended that way. Schröck, *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. viii. p. 192.

‡ Mayer published, in 1706, after leaving Hamburg to undertake the office of superintendent in Pomerania, a *Schwedischen theologischen Bericht von Pietisten*, where we find this answer to the question, What are pietists?—"They are those who, under the veil of piety, persecute the pure and true Lutheran religion, who overturn its sacred foundation (the confession of the Lutheran faith) as well as the doctrines which are derived from it, and which, being in conformity with the



Löscher, superintendent of Dresden, misunderstood the tendency of his labours—yet Spener himself and his numerous friends, after his death in 1705, were able to see that his zeal had not been useless. The University of Halle placed itself under his direction, and had, when that of Leipzig was opposing Spener with all its power, Breithaupt, Anton, and Francke, as theological professors, the last of whom was the very soul as well as the founder of so many charitable institutions, which cause his memory to be cherished. This University of Halle could count by thousands the students who frequented it, without reckoning the thousands of orphans who were maintained and educated in the *Waisenhaus* (orphan-house). Many of these students became afterwards very distinguished men: among them theology and the pulpit claim Dr. Rambach, who was born at Psullendorf in 1708, and died at Breslau in 1773, in the exercise of high ecclesiastical functions; his son and grandson, both elders of the clergy of the republic of Hamburg, did not disgrace the good instructions of the pupil of Breithaupt and Lange. Another of these students was devoted to the fine arts; the illustrious Handel, whose sublime harmony is a magnificent testimony to the powers, in art, of genius imbued with piety.\*

It is certain that an impulse being thus given, theological studies again came into favour, and the evangelical spirit of Spener extended its influence over a great part of Germany. The more the

word of God, are most necessary. They open the door of the church to all heretics." This, then, is the great offence, that they did not say to men, Do you believe in this or that confession of faith? but, Do you believe in Christ, and do you act upon his divine example? He continues thus:—"They receive and defend these heretics, grant to each the liberty of believing whatever he chooses (what an atrocious calumny!), by their hypocrisy they bewitch poor souls to such an extent, that notwithstanding their open lies and deceptions, these poor souls, which are like the idols of the Pagans, having eyes but seeing not, having ears but hearing not, follow exactly in the footsteps of their seducers, and go with them to eternal damnation." *Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ!* The historians of Hamburg apply the word bewitch to the conduct of Mayer on his dismissal from the office of pastor of St. James's, and his re-election, which, however, did nothing for the interests of public tranquillity.

\* Even in the lifetime of Spener, several works appeared which adopted his principles in theology. We would mention Breithaupt's *Institutiones Theologicæ*, lib. ii. Halle, 1695. *The Foundations of Theology* (*Grundlegung der Theologie*), of J. Anastase Freytingshausen. Halle, 1703. And after the death of Spener appeared the learned work of Lange, entitled, *Œconomia salutis evangelicæ*, 1728. Soon Majus of Giessen, and the two theologians of Wurtemberg, Pfaff and Weissman, modified a little the strictness of their system, the first in his *Synopsis theol. Christianæ ex solis verbis Christi, relatis ab evangelistis, eruta atque monstrata*. Erfurt, 1708: Pfaff, in *Institutiones theol. dogmaticæ et moralis*. Tübingen, 1720: and Weissmann, in *Institut. theologiæ exegetico dogmaticæ*. Tübingen, 1739.



edicts which were issued against pietism, from Sweden and Denmark to the depths of Silesia, endeavoured to oppose the system, the more was the good sense of the people moved by the weighty exhortations of the students of Halle.\* All Germany would probably have been roused by pietism, had not a circumstance, which, it seems, ought rather to have done it honour, put a stop to its conquests. I mean the reconciliation demanded by the strictly orthodox schools, which thought it their duty, not only to cease their attacks, but even to unite with Halle and its students to oppose what they considered a formidable enemy of the Lutheran church. The enemy, however, was only the philosophy of Wolf, the appearance of which had on the old practitioners of theology the effect which the head of Medusa would have produced, and which, nevertheless, only filled up the measure of the faults which should give the last blow to Lutheranism, by demanding the immediate appearance of its conqueror, Rationalism. This union which the disciples of Spener could not reasonably object to, since no renunciation of their principles was required from them, was the cause of the labours of many theologians, whose writings still form a great part of the matter of all modern doctrinal works. I shall mention particularly the labours of Wolf, the learned orientalist and critic; of Matthew Pfaff; of Bengel; of Mosheim; of Carpow, notwithstanding his ill-concealed, anti-pietistic resentments; of the two Walchs, father and son; of Christian Augustus Crusius, who were all known by their critical and historical researches, and who endeavoured to render possible the union of a scientific with a pious life in the Lutheran churches.† But the blow was already struck, and when once

\* This influence would have been of longer duration, and Lutheranism would have experienced, by its means, a most happy transformation, if, to the faults which we have already mentioned in Spener's system, he and his disciples had not added a total neglect in their writings, of the science of morals. Regarding it as a consequence of doctrine, they did not take the trouble of explaining it, and scientifically developing its obligations. Certainly, evangelical doctrine offers very powerful motives for obedience of the law, but cannot destroy its nature. We can understand, therefore, how the philosophy of duty was successful in the contest with theologians so little fortified against such serious attacks.

† Among these theologians, Bengel and Mosheim—the first of whom died in Wurtemberg, his native country, in 1752; the second in 1755, at Göttingen, of which city they were the ornament—deserve a special notice, on account of the vast extent of their knowledge. See, for more details of these two men, to whom sacred criticism and ecclesiastical history owe much, *The Life and Actions of Bengel*, by Burk, 2nd edit. Stuttgart, 1832; and a Latin account of Mosheim and his labours, published by Professor Lücke, in 1837, at Göttingen, on the jubilee of the University.

reason has seen clearly into a question by which it is attacked, sooner or later it must triumph over all unfounded opposition. However, it is necessary for me to show how this happy beginning was not followed up zealously, and how instead of proceeding from improvement to improvement, theologians abandoned themselves to views which could only hasten the entire fall of Lutheranism.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MODERN PHILOSOPHY: DESCARTES, SPINOZA, MALEBRANCHE, LEIBNITZ, WOLF.—THEIR INFLUENCE ON THEOLOGY.

THE reader of history cannot fail to observe that, in all times, the prevailing systems of philosophy have exerted a great influence on, if they have not entirely absorbed, religious opinions. It cannot be denied that the Platonism of Alexandria had great influence over the Greek and Latin doctors of the first centuries of the church, nor is it therefore necessary to attribute to it the invention of a doctrine which existed before, and independently of, it. In like manner did the scholastic or Aristotelian philosophy in the middle ages take possession of all the avenues of theology, which it thus compelled to submit to its empire. It was the same in modern times, when Descartes, throwing off the swaddling clothes of scholasticism, resolved to owe to himself alone the acquisition of the truth which he so earnestly desired to possess. For what else is the methodical doubt which he established as the starting point in his philosophy, than an energetic protest of the human mind against all external authority? Having thus placed all science on a philosophical basis, no matter what, he freed Philosophy herself from her long servitude, and proclaimed her queen of the intellect. Hence every one who has wished to account to himself for his existence, every one who has desired to know himself, to know nature, and to rise to its author; in a word, all who have wished to make a wise use of their intellectual faculties, to apply them, not to hollow speculations which border on nonentity, but to sensible and practical inquiries, have taken and followed some direction from Descartes.

First came Spinoza, who aimed at nothing but Cartesianism, and who laid the foundations of a Pantheism as destructive to scholastic philosophy as to all revealed theology. Then followed Malebranche, who, starting from the same principles as Descartes, arrived in substance and extent at the same conclusions as Spinoza. But wishing to trace to spiritualism what the ideas of Spinoza seemed to him wrongly to conduct to pure materialism, he drew back before the exigencies of his logic, and troubling himself little about the objections

which might be raised as to the inutility of his reflecting, yet inactive, mind, he was content to clothe his system with theological forms which would impose on the vulgar, while they allowed him to go on philosophising to the end. And finally came Leibnitz, of whom Germany ought ever to be proud, and who, though he combatted some of the opinions of Descartes, was nevertheless inspired by the fire of his genius.\* If Descartes and Spinoza deserve the credit of being considered the founders of modern philosophy, the one for having laid down principles which have been employed, with justice, in the formation of all other systems, and the other for removing all restraints on the human mind, when it wished to extend these principles into the plains of infinity, we ought to regard Leibnitz as the founder of that spiritual philosophy which first proclaimed principles, *à priori*, independently of all experience, and the great aim of which has been to make all human knowledge serve to raise the moral dignity of man by cherishing in his heart the feeling of his individual immortality. Leibnitz has left no philosophical system properly so called: all his labours tended towards the reconciliation of religious faith with reason, of philosophy with theology; and if on some points he entertained peculiar ideas which his fine genius admirably maintained, but which have left little trace in the scientific world, yet he never showed the least hesitation in his defence of the first great truths, without which no moral or religious principle could exist.†

The great acquirements of Leibnitz, his brilliant reputation, which extended to all places, and drew upon him the attention of men such as Bossuet in France, who could not agree in his religious opinions,

\* As Socrates bequeathed his doctrine to two minds of very dissimilar, though rich, characters, who therefore set about developing it in an almost opposite direction, so did Descartes see numerous advocates of his opinions employ them in the defence of doctrines which their propagators were far from considering identical. Spinoza and Malebranche were the immediate followers of Descartes; yet see if these two great men think that they have the least sympathy with Locke, the pupil of Bacon, and Descartes, and Leibnitz, the disciple of Descartes, and Spinoza. They all deny the connexion, as if it were an injury to their fame! *Histoire de la Vie, &c. (History of the Life and Writings of Spinoza, pp. 271-306, by the author).* I do not know whether, after such examples, I may be permitted further to mention, for the singularity of the fact, the Protestant Wittich, who defends with as much warmth as the Catholic Arnaud what they term the philosophy of Descartes, from which the one constructs his biblical system of doctrine, after the manner of Calvin, and the other his traditional system on the model of Jansenius.

† His first work, the *La Théodicée*, was principally directed against the sceptical principles contained in the *Dictionary of Bayle*. His *New Essays of the Judgment* developes still further his philosophical ideas.

his deeply moral and religious character, though somewhat inclined to self-love, the claims of which he vainly endeavoured to stifle,—so many and so admirable qualities excited hopes that Luther's work of reformation would be remodelled by him, and that what was too injurious in it to the ancient church, and what was too precarious for the modern, would be abandoned. But his attempts at reconciliation between the two communities are now only curious historical monuments, and his influence on the church of his country, though indirect, became contrary to his intention, even fatal to it.

Some have wished to prove Leibnitz to have been a Catholic in the sense of the Romish church ; but all his writings show that if he believed in the divinity of Christianity, he believed in only the utility of the popedom. After reading his philosophical and theological writings, no doubt can remain on the subject ; yet how many are there who know Leibnitz only by name, and who go away repeating that the greatest geniuses of modern times have died in the bosom of the Romish church ! An impartial historian ought to grant, that if we consider the inward ideas which guide men rather than the concessions which they think themselves compelled to make to their age, we shall find few of any worth, whose ambition has not been to die Christians, which does not imply adherence to any particular communion. But to confine ourselves to the great Leibnitz : his opinions on the religious parties which divide Christendom are contained in the following significant sentence borrowed from his correspondence : “Far from thinking that the Lutherans ought to be separated from the reformed party, I do not even find any matter for dispute between them ; but I think differently in the case of Popery : in order to effect an union with it, it would be necessary that some of its decrees should be mitigated, that others should be laid aside, and that several of its hurtful practices should be abolished.”\* Leibnitz had formed, properly speaking, no philosophical system, but his ideas were scattered here and there throughout his numerous works. We see, however, his desire to found a philosophy, *à priori*, general and necessary also for religion. Bayle had treated sceptically the most important truths of the philosophical doctrine of religion in order to prove them in some respects contrary to the Chris-

\* *Opera*, tom. vi. 139. edit. of Dutens. These false ideas on the position of Leibnitz in regard to the different Christian communions have been spread since the publication by the Abbé Emery, of a philosophical system of this great man, from a manuscript said by the editor to have been found in the library of Hanover ; but the laudable desires of Leibnitz to see the re-union of the Protestant and Catholic churches have been confounded with the inward sentiments of the philosopher. The words quoted above were addressed by Leibnitz to M. Ludolf.



tian doctrines. Leibnitz sought to prove the conformity of reason with a belief in revelation, on the principle that two truths cannot contradict each other. He distinguished for that two kinds of rational truths, those which are of absolute necessity, the contrary of which is impossible, and those of hypothetical necessity, or necessity depending on the laws of nature, which were established by God, and which can also be changed by him. There can, then, exist no contradiction between pure and absolute reason and revelation and faith, but only between the reason which attaches itself to certain conditions of nature and the revelation which destroys those conditions. God, the author of the laws of nature as well as of our reason, can, by the effect of his will, under certain circumstances, change the former, even when they would thus pass the limits of our comprehension. Beginning from this principle, Leibnitz admitted positively, both in the physical and the moral world, real miracles, and he did not imagine that any one could raise serious objections to their possibility. All which has been urged against reason, said he, applies only to a pretended reason, corrupted and abused by false appearances; so the simple ideas, the necessary truths, and the demonstrative consequences of philosophy, cannot be contrary to revelation.\* There is often some confusion in the expressions of those who place together philosophy and theology, or faith and reason; they confound the terms, "explain," "understand," "prove," and "maintain." The mysteries of religion may be explained so far as is necessary for belief in them, but we cannot understand them, nor make it understood how they occur: in the same way as in physics, we explain to a certain point several sensible qualities, but in an imperfect manner, for we do not comprehend them. All that remains to us after giving faith to the mysteries on the proofs of the truth of religion (which are termed grounds of faith) is to be able to maintain them against objections. Unless we have this power, our belief would not be well founded, since all that can be refuted in a solid and demonstrative manner cannot fail to be false; and the proofs of the truth of religion which can only give a moral certainty, would be counterbalanced, and even surmounted, by the objections which would give an absolute certainty if they were convincing and quite demonstrative.† The distinction which it is the custom to make between that which is above the reason and that which is against it, is not to be despised, and it is astonishing how men of genius, such as Bayle, can have disputed it. A truth is above reason when our mind, or even any created mind, cannot comprehend it; and such are the truths of the Holy Trinity and the Creation; such is the

\* *Discourse*, § 4.† *Ib.* § 5.



choice of the order of the universe, which depends on universal harmony and the distinct knowledge of an infinity of things at one time. But a truth cannot be contrary to reason; and far from a doctrine being incomprehensible which is disputed and disproved by reason, we may say that nothing is more manifest or more easy to understand than its absurdity. For reason does not here signify the opinions or discourses of men, nor even the habit which they have formed of judging of things according to the ordinary course of nature; but it means the inviolable connexion of truths.\* By these ideas on the conformity of reason and faith, which are found developed in the discourse which precedes the *Théodicée*, as well as by his refutation of Bayle on the questions of human liberty and the origin of evil which is contained in that work itself, Leibnitz inspired with great courage the theologians whom the scepticism of the philosopher of Rotterdam had somewhat perplexed; and one of them, becoming thoroughly conversant with all the doctrines of Leibnitz, scattered throughout his writings,† yet not adopting them until after a severe examination, undertook the task of arranging and amplifying them, and gave them to the learned world in a strictly regular form, under the designation of a mathematically demonstrative philosophy. Thus the disciple has had the honours of a founder of a school which, to say the truth, were due to the inventor of the system. Leibnitz supplied the capital, says Rosenkrantz, and Wolf derived the profits.‡ He reaped them at a time when another philosophy was attempting to penetrate into Germany, but which, having nothing of the German character about it, could not remain there long. It was the philosophy of the English naturalists, followed soon by that of the French encyclopædists, for Germany has in vain gone through all the modifications of Rationalism; but in doing so she has deceived herself into the belief that she has always been christian and religious. We shall always, notwithstanding her errors, see her apply all her intelligence to the service of the faith, all her genius to the maintenance of the holy

\* *Discourse*, § 23.

† Principally in the *Théodicée*; *The New Essays on the Understanding*; *Principia Philosophia*; *Principles of Nature*; and his correspondence with Clarke.

‡ *History of the Kantian Philosophy*, by C. Rosenkrantz: Leipzig, 1840. p. 41. It has become the custom, in speaking of Wolf and his philosophy, to commence by attacking it with the arms of disdain and sarcasm; but dry forms and rigid axioms cannot make us forget the spiritual depth which it was the sincere aim of this philosophy to preserve. If the influence of Wolf on theology has been disastrous, we must grant that his philosophy was a necessary transition step to that of our day, which will probably be obliged to refresh itself with the fundamental ideas of Leibnitz, if it wishes to last any time, and to satisfy in ever so small a degree man's reason and his conscience.

law of duty. If, then, Germany does not always know how to put into practice the truth, she is desirous of finding it, and shows herself indefatigable in her researches. She thought that she had made a great step towards it in the philosophy of Wolf: when that error was abandoned, she cast herself into the arms of Kant, who seemed to touch the deepest fibres of her conscience; then she took an aerial flight on the wings of Schelling, to contemplate the identity of the laws which govern the world: and now, all her illusions vanished, we see her plunging into the depths of the past, there to observe the development, by successive evolutions of that which her heart adores.

The German theologians, among others, yielded to the seduction of philosophical language, and from Leibnitz down to Hegel and Fries, they have impregnated their labours with the principles of the ruling philosophy. Let us first say that Wolf never entertained the least idea of attacking Christianity, and when we know that on his death-bed he placed all his confidence in the mercy of God through the blood of Jesus Christ, we shall readily acknowledge that the propositions which excited against him public clamour, and especially that of the University of Halle, where pietism prevailed, are not of a nature to trouble an enlightened mind.\* These were, first, his plan of reducing into theorems and corollaries all the facts of science, all that has its root in the religious sentiments,—a plan which alarmed those who had had so much trouble in shaking off the inactivity of mind into which the scholastic trivialities had thrown them; and, secondly, a discourse delivered on the occasion of an academical solemnity, in which, not content with praising immoderately the moral system of Confucius, he openly avowed himself its partisan. Hence arose his persecutions and that series of triumphs and humiliations which marked the whole course of his life, according to the success of his adversaries or of his friends.

Wolf was in the highest degree dogmatical. He laid it down as a principle that the human intellect is capable of knowing truth. His synthetical method was supported on the justice of its definitions, the multiplicity and the mathematical rigour of its proofs. Hegel amuses himself with quoting some examples of these proofs;† but if a system were to be judged of by its form, who would be more open to censure than Hegel from his almost unintelligible terminology? Wolf divides

\* Born in 1679, he died in 1754, after having re-entered the University, whence he had been banished by a supreme order of the king, at the instigation of the military authority of the place, and, sad to tell, on the denunciations of the pious and learned Lange.

† Hegel, *Logik*, t. iii. *von der synthet. Methode*.

his philosophy into the theoretical and the practical. The first he subdivides into logic, metaphysics, and physics; the second into morals, natural right, and politics. This division was generally adopted in courses of philosophy, and Kant long remained faithful to it. His religious opinions do not differ in the principal points from the orthodox doctrine;\* he admits a revelation, and proves its possibility by maintaining that God has the power of doing anything he may wish. He shows afterwards that this immediate revelation made by God to his creatures could not take place without miracles. But it is necessary that God should produce immediately in the mind the ideas of the things which he reveals, the cause of which is found in the vigour of the universe, where also is found the essence of the mind; words or other external signs must be employed for this purpose. If ideas could arise naturally in the mind, then an immediate revelation would not be necessary. A divine revelation, however, ought to have signs in itself by which it may be known.

1st. It must contain something necessary for man to know, which he cannot learn in any other way. 2nd. The things revealed must not be opposed to the divine perfections, and they must not be self-contradictory: a thing is above reason and contrary to reason when opposed to these principles. 3rd. A divine revelation can contain neither anything which contradicts reason and experience, nor anything which may be learned from them; for God is omniscient—he knows the general as well as the particular, and he cannot be deceived. Necessary truths are those the contrary of which is impossible; accidental truths, those of which the contrary is impossible only under certain conditions. Now, revelation could not contradict necessary truths; but it may appear to contradict those which are accidental. Geometrical truths are necessary, and, therefore, revelation could not oppose them; but as accidental truths refer to the changes of natural things, it follows that these may be apparently contradicted by revelation; though, if we search minutely, we shall at last be able to lift the veil from the contradictions. 4th. Revelation cannot command anything contrary to the laws of the nature of existence and of the nature of the mind, for whatever is opposed to the laws of nature is equally opposed to those of reason. 5th. When it can be proved that he who declares that he has received a divine revelation has arrived at his knowledge by the natural use of his mental powers, then his declaration cannot be considered true. 6th. Finally, in a revelation all ought to be expressed in such words or by such signs, that he who is the object of it can clearly recognise the

\* See his *Theologia generalis*, principally from § 448 to 496.

divine action. For God knows all possible symbolical means of knowledge, and does nothing without a purpose.\*

Such is the substance of Wolf's theory on revelation, which was greatly enlarged by the theologians who followed in his steps; that is to say, they wished to prove the *absolute* necessity of a supernatural revelation in every condition of things,—an idle question if ever there was one, which can only make those who like to plunge into such abstractions talk nonsense. Thus arming themselves with theorems and definitions remarkable principally for their number, their conciseness, their exactitude, and often for their puerile explanations, they thought to give more force to the Lutheran doctrines; and in wishing to demonstrate too much they became intolerable for absurdity. It is an ancient axiom in philosophy that he proves nothing who proves too much; and we have no hesitation in accusing these Wolfist theologians of being far beneath the task which they undertook. Unable to endure the violence of the sarcasms of the invading Naturalism, they sank beneath the labour, leaving to Rationalism the care of better defending the citadel, and in thus laying down their weapons, they not only confessed their own want of power, though many of them were well versed in all the knowledge of their day, but they also by their desertion declared the instability of Lutheranism, so badly organised from its very birth.

\* The works of Wolf are very numerous; but his philosophical and religious opinions are principally contained in the following: *Theologia naturalis methodo scientifica pertractata*, Leipz. 1736. 2 vols. *Philosophia moralis, math. scient. pertractata*. Halle, 1750-53. *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*. Frankfurt 1719.

## CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF THEOLOGY UNDER THE REIGN OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
WOLF.

THE philosophy of Wolf was first carried into theology principally by Carpow, Baumgarten, Töllner, and Rheinbeck. The signal, however, was given by a theologian of the most constantly orthodox university in Germany, that of Tübingen. This was Cantz, a private tutor in the theological seminary, who afterwards filled the highest offices in the church, and died in 1753, as professor of theology in his native town. Among the multitude of writings which we have of this theologian, we may mention first that which introduced him into the literary world, and drew upon him some annoyances, viz., a philosophical treatise on Wolf's principles.\* The opinions enunciated in this work were pardoned at Tübingen only on condition that he should cut off the third part, which sounded ill in the ears of the doctors of the University. In the work which terminated his career, without showing himself a slave to the method of Wolf, nor above all to its spirit, he nevertheless made great use of it. The title alone of this work shows its aim and contents.†

Ribov, professor of theology in turn at Helmstadt and at Göttingen, published his *Institutions of Dogmatical Theology*, mathematically demonstrated, as he himself says;‡ but he took care to confine himself within the limits of natural theology. Meanwhile, the bolder spirits, such as Schubert and Darjes, undertook, the first to show the eternity of the pains of hell; and the second to prove, also by a demonstration mathematically severe, and derived from the light of reason alone, the

\* *Philosophiæ Leibnitianæ et Wolfianæ usus in theologia*, Parts 1-4. Frankfort and Leipzig, 1728-1739.

† *Compendium theologiæ in quo definitionibus veritates theologicæ determinantur, determinatæ demonstrantur, oracula vindicantur. Accedit singulis articulis doctrinæ momentum, consensus cum libris confessorum, &c.* Edit. 3. Heilbronnæ, 1761.

‡ Göttingen, 1741.



plurality of persons in the Godhead.\* But above them all was distinguished Carpov, who died professor at Weimar, and who employed the reigning philosophy in all its severity on the most various subjects of theology. Possessed of great learning, he made use of his knowledge of law, which he had studied at the same time as theology, to give more value to his principles; but he only increased their cold barrenness.† Rheinbeck, a writer who enjoyed great credit in his own country, and whose influence was felt in all which concerned religious affairs in Prussia, wrote in the same way *Philosophical Considerations on the Confession of Augsburg*, which were continued by Cantz and Alwahr, and may be consulted with advantage by those who wish to become acquainted with the state of the philosophical and religious sciences in Germany during the eighteenth century. The first labours of Rheinbeck were in the field of sacred criticism. Having studied at Halle, and having had access to the different manuscripts of the Bible in the oriental tongues, in the possession of the college of oriental theology founded by Francke, he there pursued some interesting studies under the direction of H. Michaëlis, and his comparison of the various readings is not the only scientific result in the edition of the Bible afterwards published by Michaëlis under his own name. Little familiar, in the midst of his labours, with the new language of the philosophy of Wolf, he at first held it in slight estimation; but after some researches, made with the object of studying philosophy, he thought that he recognised its high value; and this disciple of pietism applied himself to construct a philosophical system, as did Carpov. Especially from the pulpit did he endeavour to propagate its principles, believing them at the same time to be fit subjects to excite Christian eloquence. There are still to be found at Berlin ancient editions of several French discourses which the churches of refuge chose to have translated for their edification; but how different is this cold logic from the masculine tones of eloquence of Superville, of Bourdaloue, or of Saurin! They also understood dialectics, but they knew better how to apply their knowledge.

Another theologian, a follower of Wolf, was Reusch, who wrote with equal wisdom on philosophical and theological subjects. In this double capacity of theologian and philosopher, he possessed the gift of showing with taste the relations existing between ancient and modern philo-

\* *Introductio in theologiam revelatam*. Jenæ, 1749. *Institutiones theol. polem.* Jenæ, 1756-58. *Tractatus philosophicos in quo plures personæ in Deitate, &c. Methodo mathematica demonstrantur*. Jenæ, 1735.

† His principal work is *Theologia revelata methodo scientifica*. Leipz. 1737.



sophy, and he would willingly have become a dialectician, if the spirit of peace which governed him had not made him apprehensive of the consequences. However that may be, he considered philosophy and philology to be the only solid bases of the theological sciences, and he soberly put in practice the system of Wolf.\*

A very remarkable theologian was Töllner, also, who possessed profound knowledge in many branches of science, and who distinguished himself as a professor by the precision and clearness of the expositions of his doctrines. In philosophy he held the same opinions as Baumgarten, whose logic he published, and of whom we shall presently speak; and in theology it was his aim to keep at an equal distance from the opposite parties. It was with these ideas of moderation, which do not, however, show that he was a very clear-sighted man, for principles have a medium only in their application, and not in their nature, that he published works which have obtained for his name an honourable place in the annals of science. By declaring his opinion why God has not surrounded revelation with more striking proofs, as well as by his instructions on the Standard Confessions, he endeavoured to spread more healthy views on that subject. But he gained his celebrity, above all, by the publication, in 1760 and the following years, of his didactic writings on theology, in which the question of inspiration is already singularly modified.†

The theologian who gave to this philosophy the most value in the religious sciences, on account of his personal character, which made him generally esteemed, was Sigismund Jacob Baumgarten, who was born at Magdeburg in 1706, and was educated principally in the orphan-house at Halle. He was, at the age of 22, admitted as an assistant to Francke, in his labours in the theological faculty, and his celebrity soon surpassed that of his colleagues. Philosophy and theology, sacred criticism and exposition, the history of the church and of literature,—all these he studied; nothing seemed foreign to his mind, and in all his inquiries he failed not to unite genuine piety with truly modest learning. Though liberal in his appreciation of historical facts, Baumgarten did not, however, think it right to pass the limits of Christian doctrine. As he advanced in his historical researches, he gave an impulse, the results of which he himself did not foresee. If he were surpassed in anything, it was in interpretation, where Ernesti and Michaëlis gathered almost all the laurels; but he deserved indisputable praise for the pre-

\* His principal works are, *Systema metaphysicum antiquorum atque recentiorum*, and *Introductio in theologiam revelatam*. Tübingen, 1744.

† Töllner, *Plan of Dogmatical Theology (Grundriss der dogmatischen Theologie*, 1760), and his *Moral Theology (Moral Theologie*, 1760).

cise and vigorous manner in which he treated of morality generally, and especially of that of the Gospel. Modern theology would give him a brevet of Rationalism for his freedom in speaking of history and certain parts of interpretation, but it would not be difficult to perceive here and there in his works, and more especially in their general tendency, a spirit diametrically opposite to what belongs to that system. Rationalism can thank him only for having formed a disciple who may be considered as its true founder in his native land.

But what did these theologians touching the fundamental principle of reform, the inspiration of the sacred books? If they were consistent, since they granted to human reason so much power in the domain of religion, they ought equally to have employed it in the examination of the foundations of religion. Finding it weak from the manner in which the reformers had laid these foundations, and in which their immediate successors had in vain sought to strengthen them, they returned to the first principle, in order that after having stripped it of its exaggerations, they might the better demonstrate its wisdom and truth.

Already had Bayer endeavoured to make the theory of inspiration appear more reasonable by granting that the Holy Spirit accommodated itself to the styles of the sacred authors, and that consequently we ought not to attribute to the Spirit of all truth the ungrammatical expressions, the inaccuracies, the want of method, which we find in several books of the Bible.\* Carpov, going still further, said that we must not expect to find strict truth in those passages of Scripture which speak of the sciences;† thus giving us to understand, what is very true, that it could not be the intention of the Holy Spirit to teach men astronomy or physics, but only what is necessary to their salvation. He here makes skilful concessions, though he does not show himself to be a clever naturalist, for the sciences in our days display in their teachings, notwithstanding the assertions to the contrary, more and more harmony with biblical facts. Baumgarten and Töllner appeared at first to join in this view of the matter, but they soon proceeded to open the door still wider, by declaring that the Holy Spirit had permitted each writer to compose according to the peculiar powers of his mind, and to arrange the facts according to his own comprehension of them.‡ But may not a different manner of relating a fact pro-

\* "*Constat spiritum se accommodasse in suggerendis verborum conceptibus ad indolem et conditionem amanuensium.*"—(*Compendium*, No. 75.)

† Carpov, *Dogmat.*, p. 166-168.

‡ Baumgarten, *Dogmat.*, vol. iii. p. 35-37. Töllner, in his work devoted to the subject, *The Holy Inspiration of the Scriptures* (*Die heilige Eingebung der*

duce a difference in the doctrine deduced from that fact? Reinhard and Döderlein enlarged the circle still more, by restricting inspiration to the idea that the sacred writers were preserved from error, and by even attributing to the purely human wisdom of the prophets and apostles, all which does not proceed from faith, properly so called.\* But who shall define the boundary-line in the Bible between what proceeds from faith and what belongs only to the domain of science, left by God to our researches, and even to our vain disputes? It results from these principles, as has been well remarked by C. Hase, a Rationalist of our times, that we can no longer say that the Bible is the Revelation, but simply that the Revelation is in the Bible. What light does this afford to the simple people to whom you say, nevertheless, that this book should always be for them the supreme guide of all they do and practise?

We know that in the Bible, all is so joined together, so mingled, so confounded; sacred history with profane, ordinary events with those which appear to have extraordinary causes, civil life is there painted in colours so similar to those in which the picture of religious life is represented, that it will always be impossible for minds not much cultivated to discriminate between them. The theologians, also, soon felt this inconsistency, and while maintaining that a revelation had been made, they inquired whether all the books of the Bible contained it; whether the authority of some of them were not inferior to that of others, whether a distinction were not to be made between the immediate disciples of Christ, who had lived in intimacy with him, and those who had known his apostles only, such as Mark, Luke, and again Paul, whose intercourse with our Lord was of a mysterious nature. This ascending progress of the human mind until it sought to fathom that which was offered to its veneration, was assuredly Rationalistic, yet it was not quite Rationalism, since the supernatural element in the sacred books was still believed in, and the idea of inspiration was not altogether banished.

*heiligen Schrift.* Linden, 1771), maintains that as to the Old Testament, Moses was directed in the choice of his subjects, and that his memory was strengthened in order that he might not be deceived as to the facts. The same was the case with the prophets and the authors of the Psalms. As for the historical books, he does not admit that their writers were in any way inspired. Nor can he define the inspiration of the New Testament; the want of harmony, however, which appears to him to exist in the different parts of the second Gospel, leads him to suspect that the compiler was not inspired; but as this Book was approved by the apostles, we must not refuse it some consideration.

\* Reinhard, *Lessons on Doctrine* (*Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik*, 3rd edit. p. 50-55); Döderlein, *Institutiones theolog. Christ.*, vol. i. p. 80. Augusti went so far as to confine this assistance to the fundamental principles of faith.

We may, however, already see that the demonstrative philosophy, applied to questions which relate as much to the opinions of man as to his history, as much to the internal facts of his conscience as to the external ones, which are the symbols or merely the expression of the former, had done much in preparing the way for Rationalism, properly so called; that is to say, for the most incomplete system of Christianity which man's imagination can create without making criticism ridiculous, as does Naturalism. The philosophy of Wolf was founded in a peculiar degree on human reason, while Christianity places science equally on the bases of reason and feeling, or rather on all the united powers of the human being; for this reason an essential element of its philosophy is an illumination of the spirit which may perhaps be disputed at the first view, but which no man who believes in a God, the Father of spirits, can have any difficulty in conceiving and receiving. History seeks in vain for traces of the happy influence which this theological philosophy claimed to have exercised over Christian communities; deplorable consequences only are to be found. Before showing what these consequences were, I ought, however, to say that some theologians, few in number certainly, endeavoured to resist the torrent, and joined their voices to those of Lambert and of Platner, who withstood it on purely philosophical grounds. Among them is distinguished Ch. A. Crusius, who died at Leipzig in 1775, professor of theology and philosophy. He was so little satisfied with the philosophy then prevalent, that he endeavoured to invent a more profound system, which, though full of wisdom in its details, is not free from obscurity when considered as a whole. As a theologian, Crusius was not without influence. A party was formed, whose members took the name of Crusians, in opposition to the Ernestians; but they soon fell into obscurity. Schelling, in his *General View of Philosophical Literature*, published in a journal,\* mentions them with contempt, and speaks of them as confused minds, who remained behind their age. Crusius, however, was especially of opinion that science ought to have no other aim than to lead us to God by making us acquainted with ourselves, in order that by this double knowledge we may appear pure before the Holy of Holies. This aim was in his opinion the nerve of science. To seek to arrive at knowledge for the sake of knowledge only, was impious in the eyes of the Crusians. In the case of a collision between faith and science, they considered it right to place themselves entirely on the side of faith, and to consider speculation as an uncertain human work, which sets itself in opposition to the revealed word. Contrary to Wolf, who laid down as a moral principle the happiness which results from perfection and from

\* In the *Fichte-Niethammersche Journal*.



the consciousness of perfection, Crusius considered as the highest moral principle the will of God, revealed by the moral precepts found in the Bible, which are in perfect harmony with the voice of our conscience.

The works of Crusius, in which are developed these ideas, equally philosophical and religious, are numerous. We ought to mention, among others, that which treats of the principles of reason, and his practical Christianity, both of which reveal his inmost thoughts.\* The principal fault which we should be tempted to find with him is the failing, so often imputed to his adversaries, of wishing to rationalise that which is above human conception. He took much trouble, in particular, to make clear the incomprehensible doctrine of the Athanasian Trinity, the solution of which he thought necessary, in order to solve other problems. When an epidemic prevails in a country, even the most robust cannot altogether escape its influence. It is not therefore astonishing that Crusius, as well as his opponent, Wolf, aided in converting the science of theology into a sort of mathematical system, which, when deprived of that warmth of soul which alone could ennoble it and give it life, is only an intellectual quibble, fitted to satisfy some few minds, but by no means capable of becoming a powerful germ of morality for the multitude. Listen to the preachers of that time, with their cold arguments and their minute definitions, and you will soon be convinced of the uselessness of their efforts for the morals of the people. They preserve, it is true, the positive doctrines of theology, but enveloped in the letter which kills, not penetrated by the spirit which vivifies. I am even persuaded that the pastoral influence of the preachers after the Reformation was better than that which grew up under the auspices of more enlightened men, because, after all, the former lived in a time of lively and even enthusiastic though unenlightened faith, which had something real in it; and the preachers, even when they tastelessly heaped one on another the texts of the divine word, spoke to souls who felt all the authority of that word; if polemical disputes made the character of a sermon very grotesque, they did not fail to please, because they were approved by public opinion, and the people were glad to learn that the Roman yoke was for ever broken. The reasoning mind does not fix itself on objects which hold the first place in the thoughts; besides the capital fault of not choosing for subjects of instruction and pastoral exhortation the great truths of religion, but, on the contrary, selecting those of minor importance, it

\* The first is entitled, *De summis rationis principiis*. Leipzig, 1752; and the second, *Short Ideas on Christian Moral Theology* (*Kurzer Begriff der Christlichen Moral-Theologie*), 2nd part. Leipzig, 1772-1773; very short, certainly, for these *Ideas* (*Begriff*) occupy only 1692 pages in octavo.

was a great aim with the preachers to strike the minds of their hearers by novelty of form, as well as by depth of meaning. In the sixteenth and first part of the seventeenth century, the sacred Scriptures always held the first place as matter of proof or simple quotation; under the reign of Wolfianism, they were placed second, and became merely supplementary: reasons deduced from the affairs of life, or even arguments based solely on poor hypotheses, were given as the only guides in spiritual life. The preachers thought that they fulfilled their highest duty, when, by considerations derived from the pictures of nature, they excited the sensibility of the heart, not reflecting that by so doing they only glanced over the surface; they did not know that in order to act upon the soul, to force it to reform, it is necessary to find the way to the conscience, to awaken it from its slumbers; and can this be done without announcing the judgments of God on the guilty, without compelling the conscience to utter cries for pardon? It is hardly credible that the abuse in the choice of subjects was carried to such an extent that the *proper manner of laughing* could be seriously treated of by one of these doctors.\* Another, taking for his text the words of the Gospel, "Jesus went up into a mountain," begins his discourse with all the gravity of a college pedant, by saying, in a loud and intelligible voice, "a mountain is a place distinguished from a plain by its elevation," &c. &c.; and, *à propos* of another verse, in which it is said that Jesus lifted up his hand, "the hand," cries he, "is that part of the body which is used to," &c. &c.† Is it astonishing that when these deplorable abuses prevailed generally though not universally, there were some who maintained that the people would be better instructed by the reading of journals from the pulpit? No! Wolfianism, having thus degraded religion, may well have sunk into silence on the appearance

\* Guerike answers for the authenticity of this monstrous aberration from the ecclesiastical ministry in his *Manual of the History of the Church* (*Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*).

† This mania for definitions, one of the fruits of the philosophy of Wolf, calls to mind that passage of the Bible of Wertheim, in which, *à propos* of a passage of Leviticus, where a woman is spoken of (Levit. xviii. 7), it is said (I quote the German), "*Eine Mutter ist eine Frau welche in Gesellschaft ihres Mannes Kinder erzeugt.*" This, says Tholuck, is what was called philosophical clearness; we add, this is what was thought fit for instruction. This translation of the Bible, printed at Wertheim, is not only remarkable for the singularity of the notes, but still more so for the much too free manner in which it attempts to render the thoughts of the Bible. I am astonished to read in the *Review of Lewald* (*Lewald's Europe*), vol. iv. p. 461, that Mendelssohn, the grave, the judicious Mendelssohn, held this Bible in high esteem. But Mendelssohn was Wolfian, and there is nothing that bewilders the best intellects so much as party spirit.



of Naturalism, ignorant as was that declared enemy of Christianity, in religious matters ; and being ashamed of its own weakness, no wonder it entirely disappeared in giving place to Rationalism.\*

\* Baumgarten-Crusius says, in speaking of the influence of Wolf, that it was of some importance, in regard to the philosophical spirit of the succeeding ages, since it taught theology to imbue itself with that spirit of gravity which is, at the same time, that of liberty. However, he adds, the result of all these labours was the formation of a new scholastic dogmatism.—(*Compendium der Christlichen Dogmengeschichte*, erste Abtheilung, p. 363. Leipz. 1840.)

## CHAPTER X.

THE INVASION OF GERMANY BY ENGLISH NATURALISM AND FRENCH DEISM.—EDELMANN, BAHRDT, BASEDOW, ETC.—SERIOUS NATURALISM.

WE have seen the edifice erected with so much trouble by the reformers gradually undermined by internal causes, thus showing how weak were its foundations, which were attacked externally by the arms of sentiment and cold reason; we are now about to view its fall under the petty attacks of a frivolity which will assume the innocent guise of an interpreter of nature. Naturalism, at this period, sought to take root in Germany, but the soil of that country did not long afford it nourishment. Minds weary of a state of spiritual somnolence from which the heads of the church, who still pursued the beaten track of their predecessors, did not appear to wish to awaken them, might perhaps have received with favour strong and pure spirits capable of uniting in themselves what was holy in the past and the most reasonable promises of the future, but in the absence of such, they lent an ear for some time to the propositions of English Naturalism and French Deism. Curiosity prompted them to read the productions of the disciples of these systems, sanctioned as they were by names which appeared a recommendation to their perusal. These were the works of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, a profound statesman, who wished to show that, independently of revelation, it is possible to acquire a true morality, the only necessary one, since it flourished in the very bosom of paganism; of Hobbes, a man of strong but bitter mind, who regarded religions in general, and particularly revealed religions, only as a means of keeping the people in subjection; of the Earl of Shaftesbury, whose acute raillery displayed all the venom of his reflections; of Toland, the implacable adversary of the priesthood, as well as of revealed religion itself; of Collins, who vented on the prophecies of the Bible especially, the hatred which he bore to the Christian religion; of Woolston, who contented himself with denying the miracles of the Saviour; of Tindal, who viewed the church only as a Government institution, and Christianity as the teacher of two or three truths of natural religion which have been known to men

in all ages ; of Lord Bolingbroke, who, unable to conceal the ill humour of a great dignitary in disgrace, dipped his pen in the gall with which his heart was filled. These were the productions which the disordered condition of religious ideas in England had called forth, in consequence of the horrors committed during the civil wars which had religion for their object ; and an attempt was made to circulate these works in Germany about the middle of the eighteenth century, with a view to induce the Lutherans to give up a church which did not promise to produce the fruits which had been expected. But the naturally grave and, to a certain degree, evangelical character of the Germans made them unwilling to decide without previously examining ; and it was during the time of trial, when Christianity existed only in forms, that some exceptional spirits declared in favour of Naturalism. But as it always happens in such a case, the opposition which arose against the prevailing doctrines was, from the beginning, divided into two parties, according to the individual character of those who took the lead. On one side the chief disputants were, Edelman, Bahrdt, and Basedow, whose tone of mind resembled, I may say, French frivolity, or, rather, that adventurous spirit which, thinking that it knows all, thinks also that it has fathomed everything, and has a right to reject everything with contempt. On the other side were, Mendelssohn, Reimarus, and Lessing, who showed more sympathy with the phlegmatic hostilities of England.\*

This breach became wider in proportion as the encyclopædic school of France obtained more renown in Germany. Thanks to the protection of a king who concealed his atheism as little as he did his contempt for good manners, we know that Berlin became the place of refuge for those who were then called Freethinkers, and they, as much by the facility of their frivolous morality, as by the boldness of their doctrines, prepared the way, in a singular degree, for the grossest Naturalism.†

\* An excellent history of English Deism, by Lechler, appeared at Stuttgard and Tübingen in 1841 ; one of French Deism, which will be equally interesting, is yet to be written.

† The celebrated historian of Hohenstaufen took a curious method of excusing the eccentricities of Frederic II. in religious matters. In a discourse delivered before the Academy of Sciences at Berlin (January 26th, 1843), M. de Raumer answers those who accuse Frederic of *not holding the true faith*, by saying that it would have been very difficult for him to choose a faith in an age and a country in which the theologians themselves did not know to what saint to pay their vows : and after saying much that is excellent on the necessity for monarchs to be only just towards their subjects, and never to disturb the conscience of any one, M. de Raumer seems to us to have altered the question. We do not ask that a

If we desire a decisive testimony to the influence of French and English Deism upon Germany, we have only to read what Laukhard relates of his own impressions, and of what he saw at the same time in his country. "I learned from Voltaire," says he, "only how to scoff; for other works, and particularly those of the English Tindal, had already brought me into a proper state of mind to form a just judgment on the doctrines of the church. It is true that I have derived infinite enjoyment from reading the French poet, who with his pleasantries, at the same time gross and delicate, has done more to injure the religion of the priests, than have all the works of the other French and English deists. While in England and Germany an author sets out from some declared principle, and seeks to convince the reader by philosophical arguments, Voltaire negligently throws out some futile reasonings, glances over the question as over a lawsuit, afterwards rails at the whole as if he had completely demonstrated what he has advanced. This does not convince, but his numerous readers consider themselves convinced, and honour the philosopher with all their suffrages. It is thus that Voltaire has been able to make so many proselytes to unbelief. He did not write for the learned; they, he thought, might seek elsewhere for the means of rectifying their ideas. He wrote for the unlearned; for ladies, princes, and merchants; to them he addressed himself in order to make the scales fall from their eyes, and it must be confessed that he took the right way to do so. All the attacks of his adversaries, from Nonnotte to Less, have been unable to weaken his credit. No one now reads Nonnotte, and Less finds readers only among a small number of ecclesiastics. The works of Voltaire, on the contrary, are in all hands, and are translated into all languages. They will be read with pleasure when the very existence of such adversaries shall have been long forgotten."\*

king should espouse party quarrels, but that he should elevate himself above parties in undertaking the office of a powerful conciliator and pacificator, and arbitrary measures never tranquillise. But it was to be expected from Frederic that he should not openly show his irreligion and immorality, and that he should respect the first truths on which are founded the morals and religion of all people, and which, if they once fall into contempt, become the signal for the corruption and decline of the best constituted nations. Read the correspondence of Voltaire with Frederic, and you will be convinced that the Atheism of the latter sprang from a source very different from that which you charitably assign to it.

\* *Life of Laukhard*, Part I. pp. 203, 268. We must not think that the works of Voltaire were the only French books at that time in fashion. I think, on the contrary, that the dictionary of Bayle was the arsenal in which the arms of Naturalism were best forged. It was there especially that the German nobles

But Lessing could not become reconciled to so uncereceremonious a mode of treating such grave questions,—a mode which was in accordance, neither with his character and his love for serious studies, nor with his ideas of religion and morality. On the contrary, it suited exceedingly well the light and unsteady characters of Edelmann and Bahrdt. These, then, were the theologians who undertook the task of freeing their country from a religious institution which was repugnant to their immoral instincts; and as they were not men who could remodel advantageously the work of the Reformation, they imagined that it would be more easy for them to purge the German soil from the Lutheran superstition if they aimed their blows at a higher mark, and declared a more open war against the establishment of Christianity itself. The best work of Edelmann, who died in 1767, is doubtless, setting aside its follies, that in which he deifies human reason;\* and where, after maintaining that as many of the heretics as of the orthodox party have falsified the New Testament by the introduction of fables into it, he endeavours to prove that Christ represents the reason or the wisdom of God, and that consequently God is everywhere where there exists a particle of reason.†

Bahrdt, in his turn, published a great number of writings half serious, half jocose, in which only the principles of a religion which he called natural were extolled. He displayed the boldness of his views

acquired that half-knowledge of which they were so proud, and which would have been so fatal to them if the political events in France had not distracted their attention from light philosophy and hurried them into the career of arms. (See *Historische Taschenbuch*, 1838, published by M. de Raumer.) Dr. Paniel characterises this so-called period of light as deplorable, but at the same time necessary as a period of transition. We can easily explain the origin of any evil; but I cannot see how its necessity, in a system which we call Christian, can be explained (*Bremisches Magazin*, Part I. p. 109). “Since these devils of Frenchmen have governed us,” said a writer of that time, “life, manners and customs are so changed that we may, with justice, call ourselves a new and peculiar people, transformed into Frenchmen in dress, food, household furniture (*Französisches Hausgeräth*), dancing, music, in fact everything.” And Hagenbach, in quoting him, impertinently adds—even to French diseases. Yes, if by these words we understand only the Deism of Voltaire and the Materialism of d’Holbach.

\* *The Divinity of Reason* is in fact the title of his work.

† On the appearance of the *Life of Jesus*, by Dr. Strauss, there were printed at Clausthal (1839) some *Recollections (Erinnerungen)* of Edelmann, in which the writer endeavoured to establish a comparison between the pantheistic views of Edelmann and those of Strauss. The author of the *Recollections* is W. Elster. Strauss, in his *Dogmatik*, answers that he is charmed to have become acquainted with so interesting a writer as Edelmann.



particularly in his *Wishes of a Dumb Patriot* (1767); but he had scarcely begun to enjoy a philosophic celebrity when an affair in which his moral reputation was compromised, obliged him to leave Leipzig, where he fulfilled the duties both of catechist of a church and professor of sacred philology at the University. I shall not follow him through his wandering life, in the course of which his friends or protectors procured for him many occupations, sometimes as an ecclesiastic, sometimes as a professor, in the towns of Erfurt, Giessen, Marschlins, (whither he went on the recommendation of Basedow, as director of an educational establishment, founded by the Count de Salis,) and of Dürkheim, where he obtained the situation of preacher and general superintendent. Still less shall I accompany him to the immense educational institution which he founded, and in which there was a department for printing, bookselling, manufactures of every description; in short, for everything save religion and morality. This establishment drew upon him great odium; so much so, indeed, that he was deprived of all his offices by an order from his superior. I will bring him at once to Halle, where he was permitted to earn a subsistence by giving private lessons in elocution, logic, metaphysics, and morals. He afterwards left this town to become an innkeeper on a neighbouring mountain, which he made a haunt of immorality, though he did not fail, while there, to preach to the public, that he had formed his system of morals according to nature. I will not follow him to the fortress of Magdeburg, where he was confined on account of his parody on an edict of the King of Prussia, for those princes who sometimes tolerate the most outrageous attacks on the most sacred laws of religion and morality show no mercy when their own decrees are assailed. I will, however, remark, that whenever a writer, however unspiritual, appeals to the bad passions of mankind, he always finds a certain class who applaud him more or less openly, and it is this fact which explains how it was that, notwithstanding the indisputably religious feelings which have always characterised the German nation, Bahrddt, with so much fatuity and immorality, found many protectors. It cannot be said that he was destitute of learning. He was educated at the school of Pforta, which has produced so many distinguished men, and had received a suitable preparation for his studies from his father, an ecclesiastic of some merit. He displayed, in his academical course, as well as in his writings, an amount of varied knowledge, which may explain the success which he met with in his early literary labours, and also the dignity of the doctor's degree, which he received from the University of Erlangen, notwithstanding his already somewhat equivocal reputation; but it is easy to understand how, even with the happiest

disposition, his irregular conduct, the domestic griefs from which he is said to have suffered, and his vagabond mode of life, left him neither the leisure nor the repose of spirit necessary for the production of works of indisputable merit. His celebrity became less in proportion as he lost the power of feeding, with the same ardour, the curiosity of the lovers of scandal.

We can form an exact idea of the emptiness of his religious belief by reading his *Confession of Faith*,\* which he published during his last residence at Halle. But what confidence can be placed in the confession of a deist, when it is not supported by the weight of a noble character? He succeeded, however, in seducing many of his contemporaries, by the witticisms and specious arguments in which his numerous works abounded.†

It might, perhaps, be expected that we should place in the school of Paulus the work of a foolish young man, who would now seem willing to expiate in obscurity the fault which he might attribute to the inexperience or the rashness of youth; we know, however, that even at an

\* *Glaubensbekenntniss*. Halle, 1779.

† Those of his writings which created the greatest sensation were, *The Little Bible* (*Kleine Bibel*), printed at Berlin in 1780, 2 vols. *System of Moral Religion* (*System der Moral-Religion*). *Letters on the Bible in a Popular Style* (*Briefe über die Bibel im Volkston*). He published a weekly review for some time at Halle, and afterwards at Berlin, from 1784-1793, under this novel title, *Execution of the Plan and of the Aims of Jesus Christ* (*Ausführung des Plans und des Zwecks Jesus Christ's*), explained in letters to readers who seek after truth. But he here treats the history of Jesus as a romance, and tries to prove that he was only the agent of a secret political society, which could not save him from crucifixion. It may be easily conceived that many took up the pen to defend what Bahrdr had so audaciously attacked. Bretschneider, who quotes their works in his *Systematic Development of the Ideas of Doctrine*, remarks, that with the exception of that published by the worthy Seiler, whose name is revered in both churches, they are worth no more than the attacks of Bahrdr. (See *Sytemat. Entwicklung*, &c., 3rd edit. Leipzig, 1825. p. 280.) We read in a polemical pamphlet on mixed marriages, some very erroneous assertions on the origin of Rationalism, of which the author considers Bahrdr as the worthy founder. This arises from the fact that many persons confound Naturalism, which openly avows itself the enemy of revealed religion, with Rationalism, which admits revelation, and which arrives, it is true, at the same results, but by the force of its principles only, and contrary to its intentions. Rationalism, as we shall soon see, does not insult Christianity, it only robs it of its dress; and having clothed itself therein, in order to conceal its nakedness, turns towards Christians, and says, "Behold, I am Christianity." As the pamphlet in question was written against Bretschneider's romance, the *Baron of Sandau*, the Superintendent of Gotha answered it in regard to Bahrdr in the manner I have just pointed out, and did so successfully.

age when the gravest thoughts ought necessarily to arise in the mind of a man in retirement, Venturini devotes the last days of a life, useless and fatal to the parish of which he is the pastor, to the collection of political anecdotes, which he forms into works without purpose. I have, however, too much respect for the intentions of the Rationalists even in their greatest aberrations, to associate with their names that of a man who commenced his history of the *Great Prophet of Nazareth* by defiling the birth of Jesus with all the crudeness of expression of which only a disciple of Bahrtdt could be guilty, and who related his *adventures* in the tone of a true buffoon.

In a supplement to this romantic history, which was followed some years later by a *History of the Establishment of Christianity*, written in the same spirit and in the same trifling form; in this supplement, I say, he relates more particularly the story of the resurrection of Jesus: supposing that Christ was not dead when he was laid in the tomb, and that the fresh air having restored his consciousness, he immediately repaired to the society of the Essenes, who concealed him from the search of his enemies. Thus, to evade the miracle of the resurrection, Venturini wishes us to believe in one equally inexplicable, viz., that a man who had lost all his blood, should, after a fainting fit of hours', nay days' duration, suddenly recover his senses, elude the vigilance of his guards, and hasten to join friends who no longer expected him. Notwithstanding the absurdity of such an explanation of the miracles of the New Testament, we shall see a person who soon became one of the principal interpreters of Rationalism, Paulus of Heidelberg, amusing himself, after the manner of Venturini, whose master he was in this respect, and trying to realise by explanation what the first had attempted by history.\* I have mentioned Basedow, in speaking of the protectors of the too frivolous naturalist writer, Bahrtdt; and it may therefore be thought that he shared the religious opinions of that author, but he entertained them under somewhat different forms. Born at Hamburg in 1723, he first devoted himself to the study of theology. He filled the office of professor at the gymnasium of Altona, where he published the greater part of his heterodox works;† but the anxieties which they occasioned him induced

\* It is on account of their similarity of species that Venturini is here placed next to Bahrtdt. Was it worth the trouble to prove by  $a + b$ , as my critics have done, that he ought rather to be considered as a pupil of Paulus? Yes, but the learning and earnestness of Paulus were wanting in Venturini.

† Above all are distinguished his *Theoretic System of Sound Reason*. Altona, 1765; and his *Essay in favour of Christianity*, a work the more treacherous since it pretends to defend Christian morality, but in which scepticism cannot always be concealed. We find in the *New Theological Library* of Ernesti, an exact explanation of his philosophical ideas (vol. v. pp. 56, 87).

him to turn his attention to other studies, and from that time till his death, he continued to exercise a great influence on educational science. On this subject he wrote much and composed many essays, which, notwithstanding the infatuation of several princes, and many others who gave him assistance, disappointed his wishes. We are assured, in some biographical works on Basedow, that if the Emile of J. J. Rousseau, put into practice in the *Philanthropinon*, which he established, became only a kind of bad boy of which parents had much reason to complain, it was to be attributed rather to the gross and nevertheless domineering character of the head of the establishment, than to the method he pursued in his institution at Dessau. But is it not true that all education which is not supported by an imperative morality is therefore destitute of a foundation? and can we expect to find a morality, the duties of which are clear, positive and obligatory, where, in the very commencement, we see passed by in silence its only sanction, which is an equally positive religion, or doubts cast upon all the truths connected with it? We cannot deny that Basedow did great service to education in an indirect manner; that is to say, by showing with much sagacity the swaddling clothes of which it was necessary to disencumber it, and by giving attention to the body which had before his time been too much neglected. But man is not body only. He has also a soul, by which his moral character is revealed, and he therefore has peculiar wants, which must be satisfied, unless we wish him soon to become the victim of his senses.

Among the ecclesiastical writers who aided this movement, I ought also to mention Steinbahr, the disciple of Baumgarten, whose principal aim in his works was to separate pure speculation from practice, not remembering that what can be distinguished by a metaphysical definition cannot always be so in the world of realities. Steinbahr wished also to take away from morality that apparent severity which does not repel those who love, for love facilitates and even makes sweet the accomplishment of all duties. The principal work containing the substance of all his opinions is a *System of Pure Philosophy, or Instructions in Happiness by Christianity*.<sup>\*</sup> His influence would have been confined to a small circle, since Germany was becoming accustomed to these new doctrines and began to appreciate them at their proper value; but as he wrote also on educational subjects, his principles did not fail to give a false direction to the moral instruction of youth. However, after commencing his career almost in the spirit of Voltaire, he adopted more reasonable opinions on studying the philosophy of Locke and Wolf, and the relation of that philosophy to the views of Töllner. Bahrdt says

\* The fourth edition is that of 1794, *System der reinen Philosophie oder Glückseligkeitslehre des Christenthums*.



of him,—“Few German theologians have said what he has said, have shown so much noble frankness, and have overturned and broken, as he has done, the idols of the ecclesiastical system. His predecessors were always content with attacking isolated errors, and in doing so they were so cautious that they never entirely developed their own system. This man has not only destroyed the old building, but he has also erected in its stead a new palace.”

These theological opinions found another advocate in Teller, who died in 1750. He was professor of theology at Leipzig, and enjoyed a certain reputation among his contemporaries as a sacred orator. He possessed also an uncommon degree of learning in the various branches of theology. Ammon speaks of him as an estimable writer, but says it is impossible to recommend him as a theologian.\* He published a *Manual of the Christian Faith*,† in which he endeavoured to prove that the doctrines of the ancient creed were as contrary to reason as to Scripture.‡

But by the side of this Naturalism, which had no root in human nature, and of which Bahrdt and Edelmann were the chief propagators, it is more agreeable to observe another kind of Naturalism, which I call serious, because it had sincere professors, and united instruction with good faith; and for this reason it aimed more effectual blows at the edifice which it also desired to destroy. We must not be astonished to find among these honest opponents of the faith, a writer whose character we are pleased to revere, and who, from his Israelitish origin, found his natural place in the ranks of the party opposed to Christianity. Mendelssohn, whose peaceable and regular life is so full of interest, and who was devoted to philosophy without renouncing the Jewish faith, did more than any one else to propagate that vague religious feeling which no one can speak ill of, but which, nevertheless, reason itself confesses to be only a bait of the imagination. His *Phædo*, translated into French, ought to have proved that the immortality of the soul seemed to him an indisputable fact; but his *Morning Hours*, and his *Lectures on the Existence of God*,§ appear to have given the signal for an immense number of works full of a religion which has no foundation even in opinion, the near neighbour of conscience, but is based only on the pure sensibility of the human soul: this religion has certainly done

\* Ammon's *Magazin*, &c., vol. vi. part 2.

† Stäudlin, *Geschichte des Supernaturalismus*. We are assured that he answered publicly to some Jewish families in Berlin, for their reception to the communion of the church, if they would make profession of the deistical faith.

‡ *Handbuch des Christlichen Glaubens*.

§ *Morgenstunden. Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes*.



more harm to the principles of the Gospel than did Naturalism with its deceitful crudeness.

Lavater, who did not doubt that he saw in Mendelssohn that Israelite of whom our Lord has spoken, in whose heart there was no guile, wished to induce him to become a professor of Christianity; and with this view, he dedicated to him his German translation of a work by Bonnet, *La Palingénésie*, and begged him to refute it publicly if the arguments there brought forward in favour of Christianity should appear to him to be unfounded; or, if he found them unanswerable, to follow what in such a case would be the course pointed out by prudence, the love of truth and probity; in a word, to do as Socrates would have done, if, on reading this work, he had found it convincing. Mendelssohn declined the challenge, and, in an answer full of calmness and dignity, declared himself to be a faithful disciple of the religion of his fathers, though he took care to confess that the Mosaic system, in his opinion, contained many things which obscured its original splendour, but that he adhered to its essence, and should do so unless his mind became completely changed in its nature. This is a frank confession of the religious Deism which constitutes the fair side of Naturalism.\*

Lessing was born at Kamenz in Saxony in 1729, in a small parish of which his father was the pastor. It is probable that the too coldly orthodox education which he received from his father, according to the accounts which we have of him, had a great influence on the mind of the young man, and inspired him with more lively sentiments than those of disgust for a church which seemed to demand the sacrifice of his reason and intelligence. When his parents, who had sent him to Leipzig in order to study theology, learned that he devoted much more attention to the laws of literature than to the confessions of the Reformation, they neglected no means of dissuading him from a project which appeared to them an inspiration of the evil spirit. Lessing, however, persisted in his resolution of pursuing a literary career; and though most of the works which he published on a great variety of literary and scientific subjects no longer possess that interest which they may have had for his contemporaries, we may yet affirm that he effected a great revolution in the fields of criticism, speculation, and poetry. Gifted with an immense power of reflection and an astonishing command of language, he wrote on all subjects with equal facility. We may say that, not excepting even Wieland, he would have been the most prolific,

\* See in the *Germanic Review* (*Deutsche Zeitschrift*), No. I. of 1829, an interesting notice of Mendelssohn, extracted from the *Erinnerungen an Mendelssohn*, by Dr. Salomon.

the most ingenious, in short the writer most honourable to his country, that Germany produced in the eighteenth century, had not his prejudices, which arose for the most part from the disastrous influences of the times in which he lived, given to his historical labours a direction hostile to the religion in which he had been instructed in his childhood.

It does not form part of my plan to give an analysis of the works of Lessing, which are as numerous as they are various ; for there are few subjects of erudition which he did not touch upon. It will be sufficient for me to mention those which relate to philosophy and theology. After residing in many different towns of Germany, whither his love of letters and of the arts had called him, he at last settled at Wolfenbüttel, a charming little town about a mile from Brunswick. Here he became the librarian of a most rich and voluminous collection of rare manuscripts and precious works of all kinds. Placed thus at the head of a library, and an object of envy to many learned men, who wished to explore its teeming recesses, Lessing was not slow to profit by a position so well suited to his tastes. The first fruit of his researches was the discovery of a manuscript of Berenger, of Tours, who had been condemned in a council held at Rome in 1069, for entertaining heterodox opinions on the sacrament of the Eucharist. It was the defence made by Berenger after his release, as much for the purpose of refuting Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had declared against him, as to define his opinions more clearly ; it was this manuscript, I say, which was discovered and soon afterwards made public by Lessing. The reflections which accompanied this publication entitled him to a distinguished position among historical critics. But not content with publishing the fruits of his historical and literary researches in the library of Wolfenbüttel, which he was allowed to print without censure, he put forth, under cover of this privilege, his own peculiar opinions, or those of such of his friends as agreed with him. In this way appeared, under the title of "*Fragments of an Anonymous Writer*,"\* some dissertations on biblical facts which he declared to have been drawn from the same library, and which cast doubts on the authenticity of those facts, or on the veracity of the narrators. Lessing, foreseeing the excitement which the publication of this work would cause, not only among theologians, but in all places where faith in the revealed writings still remained pure and entire, had added to it notes expressing the opinions of theologians in support of those facts, and he executed this task with candour, frankness, and sincerity. But this could not prevent the whole of the theological faculty in Germany from rising

\* *Wolfenbüttelsche Fragmente eines Ungenannten.*

against what they termed his audacity. Many who had neglected to reply to the sarcasms of Bahrdt, recognised in Lessing a stronger and more serious adversary, one who presented himself armed with the most vast erudition, and the closest, though most dispassionate, logic. And it must have been seen how, on logical grounds, he had overthrown all the arguments which the Wolfist theologians had brought forward to repair the wide breaches which they had made in the walls of the temple of faith. The public mind had so little sympathy with them, that the most enlightened of the disputants laid aside their arms; others, fearing for the trunk of the tree which they so deeply venerated, hesitated not to strip it of all its branches indiscriminately, in order to shelter the then shapeless object from the terrible blasts of opposition, not thinking that it would be sufficient to disencumber it of the dead and useless boughs. Rationalism, then, owes its birth to the terror felt by these theologians at the sound of the tempest raised by Lessing. Yes, such was the line of conduct which seemed right to men of learning and of a certain degree of piety; they imagined that they should save the vessel by throwing overboard the mast, sails, cordage, and even the cargo. These men are known in history by the names of Ernesti, Semler, and Henke.\*

I ought not to forget to mention a remarkable peculiarity of these *Fragments* of Lessing; it is the part taken in them by Reimarus, of Hamburg, a wise philologist, as is proved by his edition of *Dio Cassius*, but also a warm partisan of Naturalism. His *Treatise on Natural Religion*† is considered the best on that subject; and it owes its merit to the great knowledge which Reimarus possessed of the systems of philosophy as well as of the positive theology, with the weak points of which he was well acquainted. It was thought until 1827 that Lessing was the sole author of the *Fragments*. But in that year professor Gurlitt, then also professor at Hamburg, gave the strongest proofs that Reimarus had sent these *Fragments* to Lessing to form a continuation of his own. Rosenkrantz, alluding, doubtless, to the acrimonious zeal of the pastor

\* Lessing was wrong in not openly avowing the aim of his attacks. No one can doubt that the conduct of Götze towards him was ridiculous; but it would be an insult to common sense to suppose that the pastor Götze, though interested in the question, did not comprehend how much evil the attacks of Lessing boded to the future of the Established Church. The very witty apologue, therefore, published by Lessing in his periodical, the *Anti-Götze*, though charming in its form, is wanting in veracity; for the sentinel who cried "fire" because he saw the palace of the prince in flames, had not in his terror mistaken "the Aurora Borealis for a conflagration." And in proof of this we may search Germany in vain for a single Lutheran church which shows signs of life as such.

† *Die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion.*

Götze, of Hamburg, who, in his close contests with Lessing, did not always show learning worthy of his cause, or a dignity suitable for this kind of discussion,—Rosenkrantz declares that, generally speaking, the compositions of Reimarus could not have been produced in any other city;\* meaning by this to say that extremes always call forth opposite extremes.† Since this discovery by Gurlitt, it is agreed on in the literary world to speak of the *Fragments* of Reimarus, and it must be said that they are worthy pendants to his works, avowed and published during his lifetime, in which human reason is always considered as the arbiter of all questions which most nearly concern us, viz., our connexion with the Deity. Since 1839, a work has appeared, which attributes Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*‡ also to another writer named Thaer.

This Albert Thaer, whose life, as a physician and an economist, has been published,§ was born, as he himself tells us, at Celle, in Hanover, in 1752. He early derived from the lessons of one Ferry, a language-master, whom he calls his bosom friend, the first principles of incredulity in religion. To read the works of Voltaire, says he, was my only recreation when I was tired of my amours. Ferry made me read, besides Voltaire, nearly all the other French writers; and when I had, at a later period, learned their language, I read the works of all the English free-thinkers. It was thus, he adds, that he prepared for his first communion, already fully convinced that Christianity was folly. He afterwards tells us that at Göttingen he became associated with a party of friends, “a band of scoffers at all religion, theoretical and practical;” that in the intervals between his studies and his orgies he committed to paper the thoughts awakened by the perusal of some apologies for religion, which a lady had induced him to read, and that he sent these thoughts anonymously to Lessing, who revised and published them under the title of *The Education of the Human Race*.||

However this may be, these discoveries do not rob Lessing of any of his literary honours, since the *Education*, the thoughts of which

\* *History of the Philosophy of Kant* (*Geschichte der Kant'schen Philosophie*). Leipzig, 1840. p. 82.

† “Reimarus,” says Strauss, “was a Wolfist; but he was more consistent and professed more profound penetration than Carpov and Rheinbeck.”—(*Christliche Dogmatik*, i. 61.)

‡ Wilhelm Körte compiled it, as he said, from Thaer's own manuscripts. It appeared in Leipzig in 1839.

§ *Die Erziehung des menschlichen Geschlechts*.

|| I have taken these details from the *Review for Historical Theology* (*Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*), 1839, P. IV. p. 98.



harmonise little with the rest of his writings, is thought to have been revised by him. The changes which are remarked have been attributed to his more mature reflections, when, tired of polemics, he questioned himself silently and for his own instruction concerning the laws which govern the moral world. He replied, in making them his own by those thoughts on the providential laws to which humanity is subject. Do we not, in this work, one of the most complete ever written on the subjects of religious philosophy, catch a glimpse of a system which Lessing did not dare to confess openly? He had allowed it to appear in the intimacy of conversation with Jacobi, and it was not the cold frozen Naturalism which had before occupied his mind, but the strongly conceived system of Spinoza so unhappily explained before the present day.\*

Such, then, were the men who, by different means, desolated the Protestant church, and aided in estranging so many hearts from it. Their success was the more complete, because they placed themselves before the people as lights that would at last guide them in all their ways; and they designated by the injurious epithet of friends of darkness, those who refused to follow in this anti-christian direction; as if the disciples of him who alone is *the light of the world* ought not especially to be friends of the intellectual enlightenment and the moral liberty to which their master came to call them! As if light and liberty could be found elsewhere than in the feeling of our union with God, through the mediation of him who is their image and glory! Such, in the hands of these men, were the different instruments, frequently words of lofty sound, but unmeaning when applied to Christianity, by means of which the work of Luther in Germany was destroyed. Some would say, perhaps, that the intention was to complete that work; but we shall see in the second part of this volume that the Reformation now exists in name only where Rationalism rules, and that consequently every essentially Christian element preserved by the reformers has perished in the common shipwreck.

\* *On the Teachings of Spinoza*, in letters to Moses Mendelssohn, 9th edit. Breslau, 1789. p. 19-58.—See in my *History of Spinoza*, the conversation of Jacobi and Lessing on his system, pp. 236-46.



## BOOK II.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF RATIONALISM IN GERMANY.



## CHAPTER I.

### STATE OF PUBLIC RELIGIOUS OPINION IN GERMANY ON THE APPEAR- ANCE OF RATIONALISM.

THE conscientious but incomplete inquiries of Lessing into the ancient monuments of the Christian faith and the pretended rational proofs of the impossibility of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, for example, of the resurrection of Jesus, had seduced a great number of persons who had never examined into their faith; and who, without approving of the extremes to which bolder spirits dared to go, feared, from a feeling of false shame, to avow the doubts which perplexed them. These hesitating minds generally form the majority at the critical moments of society; and when the clouds have cleared away, or when after the tempest, frequently necessary to restore true serenity, they remember their weakness, they ought, at least for the instruction of future generations, to confess it openly.

This was not the case in Germany. Though we have no proof that Naturalism had become established among the great mass of the people, yet there is no doubt that the higher classes were beginning to grow familiar with this strange guest, when Rationalism appeared to hold them back on the slippery descent down which they were sliding. Hence it is owing to Rationalism that Materialism has never taken root in the German soil. Is this a good or an evil? Some would say that it is more easy to make a man feel his misfortune, and so induce him to seek for a cure when he is attacked by an open malady, than to bring him to confess a hidden sound. However this may be, we cannot sufficiently deplore the ravages made by Naturalism during these lamentable moments of mental hesitation. Societies were already beginning to be organised, the avowed purpose of which was to undermine the foundations of what they termed superstition, and to enthrone human reason as the supreme arbiter of human events, to confide to it unreservedly the direction of all within the domain of knowledge: in fact, to grant no influence to any judgments or authority which it did not approve.\* And was not the work of a numerous society done by

\* See the *Literary Announcements* (*Literarische Anzeige*) of Tholuck, No. 8 of 1830; and also his *Vermischte Schriften*, vol. ii. p. 115. Hamburg, 1839.

that Nicolai, who, a bookseller and man of letters, consecrated all his energy and intelligence to the circulation, by means of his library throughout all the countries where the German language is spoken, of the principles of the grossest Naturalism of which Lessing and Mendelssohn would never have approved? William II., deeply grieved to see that Christianity, at which his predecessor himself had so much railed, had sunk into a mere object of public derision in his dominions, issued an edict (June 9, 1788), in order to repair, as far as lay in his power, the evil which became every day more serious. His good intentions were misunderstood;\* and then, as if despairing of their cause, a party of the clergy thought it their duty to make to the prevailing spirit those concessions which they deemed necessary to appease it, and afterwards to lead back to Christianity those who had abandoned it only on account of its abuses.

Liberty generally arises from too great oppression; Lutheranism must therefore have become very obnoxious ere it thus drove minds beyond the limits of wise discussion. Semler and Ernesti thought that they could not do better, in order to remedy the evil which grew every day worse, than to proclaim liberty of thought in religion, as a want of the human mind of which no power can deprive it without injustice. It was, then, on the ground of liberty that the first rationalists bravely accepted the challenge of those who no longer confined their attacks to the external establishment of the church, but assailed the entire religion, the attesting documents of which are in the possession of that church. We see that Semler himself, after doing more than any other for liberty of thought in religion, and preaching on the subject, both by example and precept attacked both Bahrdt, whose right of filling a chair in a Christian University he disputed, since he considered Christianity as a purely human institution, and Lessing, the value of whose historical inquiries into the facts of the New Testament he questioned.

We may therefore date the origin of Rationalism in Germany from this period of decline in the Christian opinions generally prevalent in Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century, when the essentially negative philosophy which then reigned, compelled theolo-

\* William II. said, in private, to his subjects, that when they had to complain of any obstacle to their worship, or to the manifestation of their Christian faith, they ought to address themselves to him in person! As we see, Christianity enjoyed more liberty under the contemporaries of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius than under the reign of the bookseller Nicolai. Alas! we could even now mention Lutheran towns in which the perusal of biblical works exposes men to the same vexations as in the times of which we are speaking.

gians to give a better reason of their belief, if they did not wish to see the complete disunion of science and Christianity. Some of them undertook this task, and wishing to offer to this idol of science a pledge of their good-will, as well as to show their desire of conciliating its good graces, they were not content with laying down as a first principle that no part of Christianity is hostile to human reason, but they also consented to strip the ancient faith of all on which reason pronounced an arbitrary decision. It is easy to understand how, after the adoption of phraseology so consonant with rational philosophy, Naturalism, which had never found an echo among the masses, least of all among the rural populations, must have seen its influence decline. But serious philosophy did not discontinue its critical researches. It considered itself the better entitled to pursue them, since upon its ground were now debated questions which it had not long before been considered incapable of solving unless it chose to accept conclusions already drawn. Thus while the defenders of the ancient system were unwilling to make any concession of the principles which they justly considered the constituents of the evangelical faith, or of those relating to the revelation and inspiration of the sacred writings, others, more bold, tried a new path, renouncing the ancient ideas of revelation and inspiration, and attempting thus to effect not merely the reconciliation of philosophy with religion, which the disciples of Wolf had desired, but also the transformation of theology into a system of religious and critical philosophy. And from this time was drawn between theologians a line of demarcation which became more and more clearly defined, until it at last entirely separated the supernaturalists; that is, those who, without rejecting the enlightenment of time and experience, will still continue to lay down the revelation and inspiration of the Scriptures as a starting point of discussion; from the innovators who, without troubling themselves about these principles, are willing to arrive at the profession of religious truth only after making the ideas and historical monuments which contain it, pass through the purifying but corrosive crucible of the criticism of human reason.



## CHAPTER II.

## EMPIRICAL AND EXEGETICAL RATIONALISM—ERNESTI—SEMLER.

IN our first glance at Rationalism, we see its purely empirical character, and it could not be otherwise. Before an enemy whose aim was to overturn everything, it was necessary, in order to obtain its favour, to strike with it all the parts of the building which were condemned to fall, and to seek afterwards to assign motives for such conduct by scholastic arguments and considerations drawn from history. It was not yet possible to systematise a doctrine which was to be offered in place of Christianity, when it was well known to be the production of mere philosophical speculation; and even if they had wished to do so, Ernesti and Semler would not have been capable of undertaking such a task. The nature of their minds had no philosophical tendency in the true sense of the word, and for this reason, in their mode of treating of religious truths, the rationalistic element was not entirely disengaged from all vestiges of the spirit of the old school. Then exegesis presented itself, which, timid and hesitating in its origin, became gradually more bold in its invasions.

Before the Reformation, it was customary to establish rules to assist in the explanation and interpretation of Scripture. And, first of all, it was not proper to forget the rule of faith, that is to say, the universally-received doctrine, the ordinary practice of the church, the manner in which the most distinguished doctors had rendered the sense of a passage to be explained, and finally, the decisions which had been given by the assemblies of the heads of the church, and which had the force of law. We cannot consider the principle absurd, that, in order to discover the meaning of ancient books, we ought to have regard to the manner in which they were understood by the writers and learned men who received them immediately from the hands of their authors; but we can easily conceive how a reformation effected in opposition to existing authority should have rejected too exclusive rules, the application of which would have been destructive to it.\* The reformers accord-

\* I refer my German opponents to these words of Neander: "Ich bin überzeugt, dass die unbefangene Kritik in ihrer Anwendung auf alles, was in der Form

ingly declared that it was necessary to adhere to the literal interpretation, without troubling themselves whether the conclusions thus arrived at were in conformity with the ancient explanation, and they were persuaded that the results would always harmonise with their own doctrine. They established, moreover, this exegetical principle, that the Bible can have no better interpreter than itself, and that the clear passages throw light on those that are more obscure. But is not this an arbitrary principle, and one which has no foundation in history, since the books of the Bible were written neither all at the same time nor by the same persons, still less had their authors any intention of explaining the writings of their predecessors? This principle is only true so far as it is deduced from the inspiration, by which the Holy Spirit that inspired the contents of these books, has necessarily impressed on them the seal of unity. But may we not say that this unity concerns rather the things than the words? Thus we may say in a general way, that in order to obtain a good explanation of a passage in the Bible, it is well to consult corresponding passages which are more clearly expressed or further developed; and from the unity of which I have spoken, some light must proceed to illuminate the minds of believers. But this is neither an absolute nor a scientific plan. In treating of works which bear evident signs of the localities in which they were produced, it is necessary to know how to employ other instruments—sometimes archæology, sometimes philology; and if it is true that the Catholic principle did not allow sufficient philosophical freedom, yet that of the reformers was still more severe, for it deprived thought of its wings.\* In vain did some of their immediate successors, such as Flacius and Karlstadt, attempt

geschichtlicher Ueberlieferung in schriftlichen Urkunden uns mitgetheilt werden, mit dem kindlichen Glauben *ohne den allerdings kein Christenthum und keine christliche Theologie möglich ist*, nicht in Widerspruch steht: vielmehr durch den selben erst, wie die rechte Weihe des heiligen Sinnes ohne welche nichts in der Theologie gediehen kann, so die rechte Schärfe mit dem in die Tiefe eindringen den Blick erhalten kann.”—(*Das Leben Christi in seinem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang und seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, von Dr. August. Neander, 3 Aufl. 1839, Vorrede xiii.)

\* Luther had said, “It is a peculiarity of all Scripture, that it explains itself everywhere by the connexion of its passages, and that it can only be comprehended by the rules of faith.”—(*Works*, vol. iii. p. 2042.) And elsewhere, “Pay attention to what Peter says, and you will never think that you can interpret Scripture by your reason and wisdom. For this reason we lay aside all explanations of the ancient doctors; and it is forbidden to build on their labours. If Jerome or Augustin allowed themselves to interpret, we will not follow their example. Peter (in the passage indicated) has forbidden it; thou must not interpret for thyself, the Holy Spirit will do it for thee: if it does not, rather let us leave the passages unexplained.”—(*Works*, vol. ix. p. 85.)

some flights. Not only were their trials feeble, but they produced no results beneficial to science, since, instead of being encouraged, they were violently repressed by polemical discussion. But if the plan of the reformers was too exclusive, that of Ernesti, as we shall soon see, was too incomplete. He made it known in 1761, by his work on the *Laws of a Wise Interpretation*; and since that time, this founder of modern exegetical science has been the guide of all rationalistic interpreters. His principle was, that we must apply to the explanation of the Bible the same rules that we employ for profane authors; that is to say, we must make use of history and philology, of the views of the period at which the book was written, and must seek to discover the connexion of each passage to be explained with that which may relate to it.\*

This method appears at the first glance to partake both of the Catholic system and of that introduced by Luther. But if Ernesti asks us to regard history and the meaning given by antiquity to the words of the Bible, he in reality wishes only to inquire into the manners and customs of civil life, and by no means into the thoughts entertained by the writer at the time when he borrowed the terms of actual life to express his ideas; and when he seems to recommend the system of Luther, he by no means keeps in view that unity in variety which the Spirit of God must have spread over these works. As Ernesti was a learned philologer, and, as such, the oracle of the University of Leipzig, where his chair was always surrounded by many disciples, we can easily understand how, with his habit of seeking for the grammatical meaning only in the works of Cicero and Homer, he should entertain the idea of pursuing the same method in his explanation of the Bible. So learned a man ought not, however, to have been ignorant, that as many persons, though familiar with the classical languages of antiquity, do not perceive the sublime beauties scattered throughout the works of Virgil or Euripides, as many also remain cold and unmoved by the choicest passages of eloquence or poetry, or are unable to rise to the moral sense of an idea proceeding from the mind of a great writer,—so in the sacred Scriptures there must be something hidden from the common horde of readers and commentators, a spiritual meaning to be comprehended only by the spiritual or moral part of man, and which he alone can flatter himself that he understands who knows how to place himself in connexion with the source of pure and great ideas, with the

\* *Institutio interpretis N. Testamenti*. The last edition is of 1792, and is augmented by the observations of Ammon. This work by Ernesti is generally followed by that of Morus on *Hermeneutics*. 2 vols. Leipzig.

type of all truth; in a word, with the spirit of God himself. That such a principle may be rejected, who can doubt? but it cannot be seriously disputed by any man who believes that a revelation of any kind is contained in the Bible. Let us, then, leave to Ernesti the honour of having restored the good and solid studies of classical literature. It will always be the incontestable glory of German theology, that it can show at all periods of the national history, theologians who have exercised the greatest influence on scientific progress. Let us also say that not only by his precepts, but also by his example, he showed how the preachers of the school of Wolf might depart from the cold and frozen track which they had so long pursued, for he enjoyed equal celebrity as a preacher and as a professor. It must be said, however, that in the exegetical rule of Ernesti there is a great void which neither science nor erudition can fill up. However good in itself, (and no enlightened man of any Christian community will deny that it is good,) it will be necessary to complete it by that of Spener, if any result is to be produced save the sad havoc which it has made in the field of sacred criticism.\* Notwithstanding this incomplete and therefore fatal principle in exegesis, he who has been named the German Cicero on account of his

\* Let us take, for example, the word *logos*, which plays so prominent a part in the fourth Gospel and in general doctrine. If we consult the ancient writers, we find this word frequently used by them, and always in a different sense. Sometimes it expresses discourse, reason, wisdom, cause, subject of a discourse, and I know not what besides. We see hence, the Christian revelation being once established, and by this every commentator ought to commence his work, since doubt or incredulity on this first principle would take away from him every right seriously to explain the contents of the sacred books; the revelation being once established, we can conceive that the apostle, not finding in the language in which he is writing, a word fitted to express his ideas, should necessarily have made use of that which approached it most nearly, thus attaching to that word a sense somewhat different from that in which it was employed by other writers, such as Plato, Xenophon, or Herodotus, or the Alexandrians, and expressing by this word *logos*, the manifested thought of God, his only son, the splendour of his glory, the image of his person. It is the same with *pisteis*, which is neither fidelity to, nor belief in, the gods of paganism, but an union of fidelity, confidence, and love, and is used in the Gospel to express faith in Christ. Nothing can be more pitiable than what is said on this subject by Tittmann:—"At last was established this principle, which aroused the discontent of all allegorists and mysticists, namely, that each passage of Scripture can have only one meaning; because, when a man is speaking he can entertain but one idea, and so it was with the apostles."—(*Pragmatische Geschichte*, p. 135.) A child, well versed in his catechism, might say to this rationalistic writer, you do not understand the question, doctor. Revelation once established, and he who is not convinced of it is incapable of *religiously* explaining the Bible: we cannot say to the Holy Spirit, you ought to speak only after the manner of men.



pure and brilliant latinity, confined himself, on subjects of religious belief, within the limits of the Lutheran doctrine.\*

All his writings, especially his sermons, prove that he believed in the doctrine of expiation, which holds so important a place in Christianity, and Jesus was, in his eyes, the eternal Son of the Father of Spirits, and of a nature superior to that of the children of adoption. Ernesti, however, shows a certain hesitation in his belief, and this very hesitation proves that he had not risen to the idealism which appeared at a later period, and which would have induced him to maintain with warmth speculative truths that, as he knew, did not derive their origin from Scripture. Ernesti may be further reproached with having attacked the canon of Scripture at all points of which his philological learning showed him the weakness, and afterwards leaving his readers in uncertainty as to the authenticity of the books contained in that canon. He has even been heard to terminate a serious discussion by a piece of wit, which decided nothing, and might trouble the most circumspect minds. Thus, for example, he said that he did not wish to reject the Revelation of St. John, adding that he should consider that man a great theologian who should confess that he understood nothing of it. He believed in a certain sort of inspiration to the end of his life, as far as regards the New Testament. As to the Old, he regarded it, as did Schleiermacher at a later period, as having been written for the Jews alone, and so of no importance to Christians. This did not, however, prevent him from evoking inspired oracles before his exegetical tribunal, and teaching them the mode of expression which they should have employed in order to be better understood.†

In this equivocal position, as Christian pastor and professor, it is only just to make known what were Ernesti's opinions on the Naturalism which opened the door of the German church to foreign Deists. "The Chancellor Pfaff," says he, "regrets that the Deistical works have been translated into German. He has many reasons for doing so. But he consoles himself by the reflection, apologetic writings also have been translated. This consolation is not always sufficient. We have

\* Kant, nevertheless, was never able to confess the latinity of Ernesti to be purely Ciceronian, as his contemporaries were pleased to designate it. (Barowski, *Darstellung des Leb. und Charak. J. Kant's*, p. 171.)

† It was, doubtless, this apparently equivocal position which caused a rationalist of our day, Professor Richard, of Strasburg, to say, in an article *on the movement of religious ideas in Germany*, full of talent, but of a tendency to Naturalism astonishing in a theological professor of the nineteenth century—"Ernesti, preaching before his parish of Leipzig, acts an orthodoxy of which no traces are to be found in the exegetical course delivered to the students on the morrow." See *Nouvelle Revue german*, 1835 (*Deutsche Zeitschrift*, 1835).



remarked, that in these apologies there is not much which can refute the Deistical tenets, and this we will now proceed to prove by the testimony of one of these works, which has nevertheless some celebrity. John Taylor, in the preface which we have before mentioned, speaks of the reign of God under the Gospel, and wishes to show that it is very different, and even far superior, to simple natural religion. But when he attempts to show wherein lies the difference, and especially in what the superiority of the Gospel consists, he presents only this very natural religion, placed in a brighter light, and with clearer discoveries of its rights, motives, and hopes, thus better known than they were to the wisest philosophers. This apology, therefore, contains only natural religion revealed immediately by God; and is not this the general plan of those English Socinian authors who have been so much praised? The Deists do not understand their own interests, when they grow angry about such books, for they agree with them on the principal points; and what more would they have?" \*

Let us compare this attack of Ernesti on Deism and Socinianism with the eulogiums which he bestows on the otherwise celebrated writer, Taylor, and we shall be enabled to form a just idea of the inconsistency of the learned professor of Leipzig. The illustrious Locke, not content with having thrown a light on the human understanding, which, however, seems to be considered doubtful by some, wished to exercise his powers in the domain of theology, and especially in its didactic part, *Rational Christianity*, but he obtained no lasting renown. Yet it is as a theologian that Ernesti, whose severe words against the bad apologists of religion fall with full force on the English philosopher—it is, I say, as a theologian that he recommends him to the numerous readers of his library. In fact, Michaëlis became the editor of Locke's *Paraphrase of the Epistles of St. Paul*, a paraphrase which totally disfigures the ideas of the apostle. Ernesti, it is true, removed from the work some faults and even doctrinal errors, but he confesses that he learned from Locke "the true method of a good interpretation of the Epistles of St. John."† If confusion and chaos do not exist in these ideas of Ernesti, we know not what name to give to these inconsistent opinions of the same author. Thus it is, that having once entered on the paths of Rationalism, even when only at the very commencement, as was Ernesti, we have no longer the right to condemn the views of others without incurring the accusation of inconsistency or of arbitrary conduct; and hence the position of an honest Rationalist is at once

\* *New Theological Library*, published by Ernesti, vol. i. p. 115.

† *Ibid.* vol. x. p. 883.

dubious and painful; one, in fact, which no good logician would accept. We shall certainly never dispute the services rendered by this critical science to a severe interpretation of the Bible; and to Ernesti especially, who gave the impulse, a great portion of this honour is due. But the results being considered, can it be said that the principles deduced from this science possess an absolute value? Teller, however, thought so, when he wrote upon Ernesti a pamphlet, interesting though not strictly impartial.\* Rationalism had need, then, of a writer less timid and more capable of remorselessly abandoning Christianity to philosophy; and this it found in Semler, who, during the thirty years of his professorship at Halle, made use of his chair and his pen to undermine the very foundations of the Christian edifice.

\* *J. A. Ernesti's Verdienste um die Theologie und Religion.* Berlin, 1782.

## CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER—SEMLER—HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS — EXEGESIS — HISTORY—ACCOMMODATION — HIS FAVOURITE SYSTEM.

EDUCATED in the orphan-school at Halle, Semler preserved throughout his life somewhat of that practical piety which he there learned, and to his pleasant recollections of his youth is perhaps owing his respect for some articles of the Christian faith to which his writings were in general so hostile. The rationalistic direction which he pursued in his labours dates from his first interview with Baumgarten, who taught him to recognise no impediments in the domain of historical and exegetical criticism. They first became fellow-labourers in the *Neuigkeiten der Deutschen Bibliothek*, and in the translation of the English *Universal History*, by Guthrie and Grey, and they were subsequently colleagues at the University, where Semler commenced that series of works which caused him to be decidedly recognised as the father of modern Rationalism. But while we do justice to the activity of Semler, to his judicious observations on many points of church history, we must, from an examination of his writings, agree with contemporaries in saying that he was deficient in two powers necessary for the founder of a school, viz., that of elocution, and perhaps still more that of skilful exposition.

The same disorder which reigned in his lectures, prevailed also in his writings, and his success can be explained only by the novelty and boldness of his opinions. He was accustomed to maintain, in the opposite extreme to Spener, that piety has nothing in common with the theological sciences, a principle which Wolf had already brought into esteem. This principle must be condemned by good sense ; for is there not an intimacy, a secret though real bond, between holiness and wisdom, between knowledge and obedience ? Another of his principles is the distinction which he deems it necessary to establish between the essence of Christianity and what is only accessory to it ; or, as it has been said in France, between the fundamental principles of religion and those which are not so : and as he took upon himself to trace a line of separation, he pointed out the apostles' creed, as containing a faithful

summary of all which a Christian ought to believe. On this somewhat arbitrary foundation, which he, however, considers impregnable, he attacked the *Fragments* of Lessing, who denied one of the articles of that creed, viz., the resurrection of Christ. But it might be asked, who gave to Semler this right of placing his line of demarcation between the essential and the non-essential; for if it was repugnant to the individual reason of Lessing to admit the resurrection of one buried as dead, we cannot understand how the reason of Semler should surpass in sagacity that of the librarian of Wolfenbüttel.

In exegesis, Semler wished, as did Ernesti, that it should be confined to the grammatical meaning, and he declared this method to be sufficient to lead us to an understanding of the sacred writings. It was in consequence of this mode of proceeding, that from the very commencement of his career he considered the demoniacs merely as madmen, whom it was necessary simply to bind in order to prevent them from doing mischief. "Confounding thus," says Hase, "our times, when the power of demons has been destroyed by Christianity, with those of Jesus, thus also impugning the historical fidelity of the New Testament, and, by a necessary consequence, casting suspicions on the infallible veracity of Jesus, who cast out the demons as demons."\* We can easily conceive, that with this mode of interpreting the sacred books, there could be no question concerning the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When called on to explain his views on this point, which alone can maintain Protestantism as a religion, he defines it as a state of holy contemplation of the mind (*andüchtige Gemüthsverfassung*). What authority can those words possess which, being no longer the formal expression of the will of the Most High, are only the inspiration of the pious sentiments of a writer who could so easily become the victim of his own illusions?

Thus sacred criticism was Semler's first battle-field. "The field of criticism," says he in many passages of his writings, "was at the period of my first essays still uncultivated." "I have termed criticism," he says elsewhere, "a science newly born, at least among German theologians."† For it is well known that it was a Frenchman, Father Richard Simon, de l'Oratoire, who was the real founder of sacred criticism. His works were placed in the library of Semler, as they were in those of all theological professors; and if to him we join Spinoza, who showed not that he was a Christian, but only a philosopher, by the publication of his theologico-political treatise,—Spinoza,

\* C. Hase, in his *Hutterus redivivus*, 4th edit. Leipzig, 1839. p. 184.

† Semler's *Erklärung über einige neue theologischen Censuren*, 1777.

who, with less erudition, but with more boldness than Richard Simon, expressed his doubts concerning the formation of the canon and the authenticity of a great part of the Bible,—Spinoza, who, for a Jew, showed great good-will towards Christianity, though he stripped it of its supernatural character ;—we shall then be convinced that if Semler did lay the foundations of sacred criticism, as he seems to boast, it was only in his own country, and Spinoza ought always to be regarded as the earliest founder of modern Rationalism.\*

Besides this, it may be said that the criticism which Semler founded is much too negative, that it bears an exclusively destructive character, and that in this he, like Ernesti, far exceeded his own doctrinal views, and in so doing gave no proof of genius. Genius has more unity ; far from proceeding step by step, as does empirical science, it places itself at a great height, whence it discerns objects better, and takes a more comprehensive view of them. Semler shows this inclination for destruction principally in his labours upon the formation of the Canons, especially that of the Old Testament. “ We will suppose,” says he, “ that a traveller, desirous of information, addresses himself with sincere feelings to the greater part of the Jews resident in Palestine, they will speak to him of the twenty-four books contained in the Bible ; let him turn to the Samaritans, they will send him to the five books of Moses ; should he come to Alexandria, there he will hear more than twenty-four named. It is certain, then, that from this purely historical testimony we can decide nothing respecting the divinity of these books.”† And how does Semler come to a decision on this point ? “ The true proof,” says he, “ of the divinity of a book is the internal conviction of the truth of its contents. This is properly *fides divina*, and it is customary to define it in biblical style, but very clearly as the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the mind of the reader.”‡ And in virtue of this prin-

\* One of the best pieces provoked by Strauss's *Life of Jesus* is indisputably that of the French author and poet, Edgar Quinet, a translation of which has appeared in Germany, and which has been reproduced, either wholly or in part, in many of the theological reviews of that country. This is what he says with a perfect knowledge of the subject : “ If we re-peruse his *Tractatus*, and his remarkable *Briefe an Oldenburg*, we shall there find the germ of all the propositions lately maintained in German exegesis.” I find M. Quinet's work in the *Zeitschriften*, published at Brussels, 1828, p. 468. But I believe that I have quoted its testimony in my *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Spinoza*.

[See “ *Review of Strauss's Life of Jesus, from the French of Professor Quinet*,” in *The Voices of the Church, in Reply to Dr. D. F. Strauss*. By Dr. Beard. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1845.—E.]

† *Freie Untersuchung des Canons*, Part I. p. 28.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 39.



ciple he pitilessly ejects from the Canon Solomon's Song, the Book of Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the Chronicles, while in his opinion the Books of Samuel, Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Daniel, are only doubtful. As to the book of Ecclesiastes, he thinks it very possible that it may be the work of several writers, and respecting the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, he willingly refers to what has been written on the subject by Astruc, Richard Simon, and Vitranga. These authors have endeavoured to show that the Pentateuch, and especially the book of Genesis, was composed of different fragments, whose date cannot be precisely determined, since the copies of the Pentateuch, together with those of the other parts of the Bible, were destroyed during the plundering of the country, and were afterwards re-compiled by Ezra. This fact would account for the different readings, since Ezra's authority was not acknowledged by the Samaritans, and would also explain the preference shown by Christians for the Greek translation rather than the Hebrew original.\* As the rejection of the Canon, or of the great part of the books of which it consists, did not proceed from a scientific examination of historical testimony, but simply from a personal repugnance, which had its origin in religious ideas, directly opposed to those found in the Bible, it is not astonishing that these same feelings induced Semler to reject many things in the New Testament which did not accord with his pre-conceived opinions.

We see already, that though Semler rendered real service to the science of sacred criticism, if only by compelling the supernaturalists to enter on studies highly honourable to those who never separate knowledge from faith, intelligence from piety, we cannot the less deplore the too bold tone of his conjectures, and that imperturbable assurance of a writer who has more confidence in his own feelings than in the testimony of many persons whose sentiments might very possibly be quite as pure and sincere as his own. Thus, to borrow a scholastic expression, it was always Semler's custom to decide *à priori*, as a last resource, of facts which can be well judged of only with the instances before us.

And does not his mode of understanding Christianity present a new error in that system of accommodation which he so much extended, and which has been so much abused by his successors, in consequence of the difficulty, inherent in its nature, of assigning limits to it? We find the first traces of this system of accommodation in Semler's preface to his *Paraphrase of the Epistle to the Romans*, and he afterwards

\* *Versuch einer freieren Lehrart*, p. 96.

developed it in many of his writings.\* At the first glance this system presents a somewhat specious appearance, and had it been applied with moderation, it could not have been altogether blamed by reason and conscience; for accommodation might be understood as a condescension, which Jesus and his apostles would have extended to the ignorance of those whom they instructed: but this condescension would never have been carried so far as to tolerate errors, still less so far as to suppose errors truths. It would have been confined to some practices unimportant in themselves, to the adoption, for example, of their customary mode of teaching in parables, to the use of circumspection in employing the axe of reform against the ceremonial law; in a word, to acting in such a way as to avoid wounding certain prejudices which were not hurtful to the true idea of religion and morality. The Apostle Paul defines this mode of action as being “all things to all men,” in order to gain many. But there is another sort of accommodation which could never have been practised by Jesus nor by the apostles, since it bears too close a resemblance to hypocrisy, and the moral character of Christ and his disciples would have been stained by it. Men may be accused of dissimulation when they pass over in silence that which they dare not openly condemn; or of hypocrisy or actual deception when by their words they give us to understand that they consider as true that which they know to be only the offspring of error or superstition. And undoubtedly Semler, and the rationalists after him, accuse Jesus of these sins, when they say that, speaking of angels, of the expectation of the Messiah, of the last judgment, of demons, of the resurrection of the dead, and, finally, of the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, he did so only to accommodate himself to the notions of his day, in order that by not contradicting them he might the more easily succeed in overturning the Mosaic religion. The very enunciation of such a system must deeply grieve that man who entertains any feeling of the moral character of Christ; and yet pure rationalists, I should say more consistent than some others, have not failed to attempt to defend it, and even to maintain its morality.† The celebrated historian of the church, Henke; Nachtigall, Teller, Eckermann, Vogel, and others, have made vain efforts to do so; writers of more acknowledged moral authority have successfully opposed them. Among these, we should include Storr in his *Dogmatik*, Gess in his *Briefen über einige theologische Fragen des Zeitalters*, and espe-

\* Particularly in that entitled, *Vorbereitung zur Theologie Hermeneutik*. Halle, 1762; and in *Apparatus ad liberatiorem N. Testamenti interpretationem*. Halle, 1767.

† In the *New Magazine* of Henke the morality of this system was maintained with uncommon temerity.—(*Neues Magazin*, vol. ii. p. 2.)

cially Mosheim, Reinhard, and Süskind—three men whose words possess a force to which every rationalist must grant serious consideration. The last-mentioned theologian undertook, particularly, to combat this system, by showing that it was to the honour of human reason to reject a theory which degraded it so strangely.\* Bretschneider, whose rationalistic instincts incline towards the doctrines of Semler and his adherents, but who, with the avowed sentiments of Kantian morality, should profess with the strictest rigour the law of duty, extricates himself from the difficulty by saying that the question should undergo a new examination.†

Another idea peculiar to Semler, concerning exegesis, is the distinction which he said should be drawn between those things contained in the Bible which are only local and temporary, and those which are of all times and all places. This is the fundamental idea to which he always gave a prominent position in exegetical studies. Ernesti had not yet entered on this path, and Semler took care to anticipate him. Döderlein shows, in an article on the paraphrase of the Epistle of James by Semler, that this localising system already enjoyed a certain degree of credit. "Thus," says this theologian, "many able interpreters of the Bible sailed on this troubled ocean of dogmatical and ascetical exegesis, and sank into the abyss while trying to purify and throw light on its surface. Much still remained incomprehensible, and will remain so until light be shed on history itself, and in that light we may see the persons of whom the apostles speak in their Epistles, where, assuredly, many local things are to be found. With this torch of ancient history in his hand, Dr. Semler, who, wherever he has appeared, has thrown new light on science, penetrates into the views and spirit of the catholic Epistles in general, and particularly of that of St. James. He seeks and finds new truths, though we may foresee that, on one side, some will not be able to bear so much light, since they are better content when they can seize some dogmas in the midst of clouds than when they can see the truth in broad day; and, on the other side, that there are still many things in a state of twilight, and that here and there a false light may shine."‡

In this question, as in the preceding, sacred criticism may derive

\* Mosheim's *Sittenlehre*, Part I. p. 445. Reinhard's *Christliche Moral*, Part III. § 297. Süskind, an article in the *Magazine* of Flatt, of which he became the editor, No. xiii. p. 1-16.

† Bretschneider's *Handbuch der Luther. Kirche*, vol. i. p. 119, of the 4th edit. published 1818.

‡ *Theologik Bibliothek*, vol. ii. p. 263. Tholuck, in his *Fermischten Schriften*, vol. ii. p. 61 and 62, quotes many curious examples of this systematic mania of Semler, in wishing to localise all which he sees in the New Testament.

advantage from these views of Semler; but if no limit be fixed to this spirit of localising, (and I know not that any has yet been drawn,) whither will such ideas lead? Men of inexorable consistency will find that the doctrines, and consequently all in the domain of dogmatism and morality, are taught only for the time, or they will adopt some maxims of them for each of the epochs of history to which they may please to apply them. Every rash man will with such principles undertake to separate the chaff from the grain; that is to say, that which Jesus and his apostles taught only for the men of their time, from that which they designed for the instruction of all generations. How can we blame them for waging war against what Semler considered as essential and indestructible? The spirit of the times, they will say, is changed; but I would ask whether, supposing that the truth is contained in the Scriptures, they should be made to yield to all the exigencies of time, and to accommodate themselves to the spirit of the age, or whether it is not rather for all men of all periods to regulate their conduct by the prescriptions of this eternal truth. It is a matter of regret that the philosophy of Kant, otherwise imbued with so much morality, should not have thrown off this idea of Semler, but should, on the contrary, have employed its aid in the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, which it has carried to its greatest extreme.\* It may be easily imagined what a destructive influence such principles had upon the doctrinal system of Semler. An exegesis, which found in all parts of the New Testament ideas only relatively true, and for that very reason transitory, took away all the positions of doctrine: thus we may say that Semler, if consistent, allowed no value to doctrine in general. It is for this reason that he insists so much on the difference between religion and theology. But can such a difference exist, except in words, in the mind of him who understands their true signification, unless, indeed, he means to say that theology only systematises that which belongs to the province of religion? Still, in that case, theology would be only the form in which religious ideas are clothed, not a regularly arranged system related to religion. This, however, our theologian considered it to be when he established his new distinction between public and private religion. Public religion, he said, ought to be always beyond the reach of attack, that the public peace may be preserved; but private religion may vary at the pleasure of individual consciences. The accusations of indifference brought against Spener would have been more applicable to

\* These rash men, however, cannot go much further than did Semler himself, when he said, in speaking of the work of an English Deist, "The Christian religion, having been a local religion, cannot become the universal religion." See *Zusätze zu Lord Barrington's Versuch über Christ. und den Deismus*.



Semler, and yet his singular opinions were only the consequence of a false mode of thinking, and not of indifference, for they were so firmly implanted in his mind that he spoke of them with warmth and with unequivocal marks of conviction to his friend Niemeyer only a few days before his death.\* “People keep too much to the external,” said he; “always too much to the letter, and too little to the spirit, of Christianity. You maintain, very justly, that the first Christians knew much less of external history than we imagine ourselves to know.” After speaking of several things contained in his writings, and particularly of the Canon and the inspiration of the Scriptures, “There is nothing but ignorance in history,” added he; “and this it is that causes the Christian religion to be confounded with the Bible, as if there were no Christians before there was such a book as the Bible—as if there could not be a more or less good Christian who knew only one of the four Gospels, or only one of the number of Epistles which we possess.” “Before the fourth century,” said he again, “there was no complete New Testament, and yet there have always been true disciples of Christ, stronger or weaker in proportion to their ability to throw off the ancient spirit of Judaism.” What would these arguments prove, were they all well founded, if not the fact that the reformers, in destroying the idea of an instructing church, have made the greatest ravages in the kingdom of Christ, and that this system would assist in the work of its reconstruction? This is not the only argument which Rationalism has furnished, not to Popery, but to true Catholicism.†

It is customary to say that the field in which Semler has gathered most laurels is that of church history. I do not wish violently to strip him of them, nor to blame Baumgarten-Crusius, who holds him in such high estimation on this point; but, as it has been justly said, it is by

\* How could Semler arrange a system of Christian doctrine, when he pretended that all the dogmatical points of Scripture are only accommodations to the prejudices of the Jews, and, as he himself somewhere calls them, small local ideas (*Kleine Local-ideen*)? Thus, though he sometimes employed the terms Mediator, Son of God, Redemption, and others, he attached to them no idea peculiar to the Christian doctrine. The rationalists who have most closely followed his footsteps, such as Henke, Eckermann, Wegscheider, and even Bretschneider, have been equally unable to present more than the negative side of his doctrine, when they have attempted the task, and the history of doctrine, which should form only a part of their works, occupies nearly the whole of them. The principal works, by means of which Semler propagated his religious opinions, are his *Introduction to Baumgarten's Dogmatik*, his *Essay* already quoted (*Versuche einer*, &c.), and his *Institutiones ad doctr. christ. liberaliter docendam*. Halle, 1774.

† See for more details the work of Niemeyer: Semler's *Letzte Aeusserungen über religiöse Gegenstände, zwei Tage vor seinem Tode*.



the effects which they have produced that we should judge of the merit of his researches, and we know that these effects have been purely negative. We may form an idea of the manner in which he treats history by the following passage in one of his most esteemed works:—"The sources whence the best writers of the first and second centuries have derived their information are not authentic. They consulted only the Greek translations which came from Alexandria, many rhapsodical works filled with reveries and fanatical narratives. It is to be regretted that we no longer possess the writings of these self-called heretics of that period. The little which remains of them proves that they would have transmitted to us something better than the miserable compositions of the catholic party who have survived them." \* We see here, by a single stroke of the pen, discredit thrown on the whole church of the early centuries, catholic as it then was in the true sense of the term; and a preference given to the gnostics or other heretics of the time whom the universal verdict of Christians rejected from the bosom of the church. We are therefore not surprised, when we know the predilections of Semler, to find him criticising with bitterness those fathers of the church for whom we are taught so much veneration by Neander in works that have the same object as those of Semler.

I will conclude my observations upon Semler by giving a short exposition of the religious theory which he cherished above everything, and of which he loved to speak. There existed, according to this theologian, in the bosom of the primitive church, when yet in its cradle, two parties, one of which desired to unite philosophical belief to the religious system of the Jews, while the other declared its independence of all influence. Christ appeared to conciliate them. Thus we see, that when he spoke with the Jewish party, he was eager to do homage to Moses; and when, on the contrary, he addressed himself to the gnostic party, he spoke strongly against the prejudices of his nation. After the death of Jesus, his disciple Peter placed himself at the head of the Jewish party, and for this reason he confined the sphere of his activity to Judea. Paul declared himself for the gnostic party, and therefore are his views so liberal and his ideas more applicable to human kind. It was an inevitable consequence, after the death of the apostles, that these two parties should be divided into an infinity of smaller ones. The Christian churches felt the inconveniences of this, and the project of an universal or catholic church was formed. The bishops, therefore, met in council, and united the views of Peter and of Paul. Hence the church as it was at the period of the Reformation.

\* *Auszug der Kirchengeschichte*, t. i. p. 40.

In all these arrangements, all these combinations, do we see the least glimpse of the Spirit of God? Is not all considered as the work of man, the work of that wisdom sometimes called folly by Scripture? And what a part is Jesus made to play in this collision of parties! This, however, is not all. The four Gospels which we possess, pursues Semler, form a part of the exclusively Jewish system, and those which contain the conversations of Jesus with the gnostic party are lost, with the exception of that of St. Mark. As to the Epistles of St. Paul, they, it is true, belong to the latter class; but the catholic Epistles of James and Peter were written only for the purpose of effecting the so much desired fusion of the two parties. This is, certainly, a system which shows ingenuity, but has it not its only source in the imagination of Semler? Suppositions, and always suppositions: this was the mode of proceeding of this author; and if he found any obstacle in his path (as, for example, Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, whose authenticity was not yet denied, and which bears so deep an impress of what Semler would have called the Jewish party), then, without troubling himself concerning history or other testimony as authoritative, he called imagination to his aid, and said that the apostle composed it only to please the Jews, and at a period of his life when he still hoped to reconcile them to his gnostical ideas. Semler added, moreover, that the epistles were not addressed to the churches, as generally believed, but to their spiritual conductors; and when he was opposed by the unanimous testimony of antiquity, he answered that no confidence should be placed in the evidence of the ancient doctors, since they were unlearned men. Yet no transcendent learning is here implied, such as all minds are not capable of, but simple historical testimony, for which it is necessary only to have eyes to see and ears to hear. The ancient doctors were in a position much more favourable for giving evidence concerning a fact, than was a man of the eighteenth century, shut up in his closet, who nevertheless pretends to give his assertions as indisputable proofs.\*

Such were the principal opinions which Semler endeavoured to spread during a long career spent in instruction, and we are assured that the zeal of his disciples went so far that he frequently showed his dissatisfaction on that account.

Such was the course pursued by a man of learning, but blind temerity, in order to drive out from his native land the sensuous sophistry which, under the name of Naturalism, had attempted to invade it, and to restore what he falsely believed to be Christianity—the serious but openly anti-Christian philosophy of his day. If Naturalism, as such,

\* See *The Life of Semler*, by Eichhorn, in his *Allgemeine Bibliothek*, &c.

was compelled to keep silence, the impartial observer must say that in making concession after concession, Rationalism has transformed itself into Naturalism ; and as it nevertheless pretends to be the expression of the purest Christianity, we cannot wonder that not only the true Christian, but even the simple historian who judges impartially, should logically dispute the right of its professor to declare himself a real member of the church of Christ. Many rationalists, who believe themselves to be more near the truth, because they keep at a respectful distance from the naturalists of the last century, seek to exculpate Semler from all participation in such excesses, and say that he was the first to lament them. In that case, the professor of Halle should have abstained from laying down principles the results of which he ought to have foreseen.

We ought not to be surprised at any conclusions which the human mind may draw from a principle which is said to be founded in truth. The only reason for astonishment is, that we see so many estimable men as the camp of Rationalism can number, professing these very principles, and at the same time endeavouring with one hand to arrest the progress of the chariot which they are impelling with the other. The assertions concerning the impiety and religious incredulity of Semler can be considered only as the gratuitous ebullitions of passion. We should remember that certain naturalists of his day, seeing his great tenacity in retaining the fragments of the ancient faith which he wished to keep, designated him by the name of Pietist, which had already in the mouth of the frivolous become an injurious epithet. To pretend that he laid himself open to the accusations of scoffing, of gaiety of heart, and of mental hypocrisy, is to show strange ignorance of human nature. It grieves me to find Tholuck, in his *Vermischten Schriften*, casting on the morality of Semler insinuations which so able a writer should never employ against an adversary. Who does not know now that in all ranks of society may be found noble characters who, in politics as in religion and philosophy, grow warm in the cause of that which they believe to be truth. Semler was assuredly deceived, first, in considering as the sole essential in religion that which the tradition of eighteen centuries had not regarded as such, and, above all, in supposing that there could exist a medium between the rigour of logic and the authority of a religious truth which the human mind can know only by an immediate revelation from the Deity. But as no one is responsible for more than his own works, we should not misunderstand a certain nobleness of intention in Semler, since he sought, by rationalising Christianity in his own way, only more effectually to confound its enemies. We can only deplore that such great learning was not employed to fortify that

which it destroyed. A more skilful judge than myself confesses that the qualities peculiar to Ernesti and Semler were more exegetical and historical than dialectical, more critical than dogmatical, and that it was with great trouble that they cleared the ground covered by the remains of ruined palaces. But as their resources were exhausted, they left to each one the care of building for himself a little house, if the ground appeared to him still safe and the materials fit for use. Many others took upon themselves the task of building, but theirs was only a provisional edifice, which was soon to fall to the ground.\*

\* Twesten in his *Vorlesungen über Dogmatik*, vol. i. p. 224.

## CHAPTER IV.

SACRED CRITICISM—ITS OBJECT BEFORE THE TIME OF MICHAELIS  
—BIBLICAL THEOLOGIANS, MICHAELIS, DÖDERLEIN, MORUS,  
NÖSSELT, REINHARD, SCHOTT, ZIMMERMANN, KLEIN, PLANK,  
BÖHME, STORR, AND STEUDEL—SUPERNATURALIST THEOLOGY  
OF ZÖLLIG.

WE know that the autographs of the apostles (there can be no question concerning those of the prophets of the ancient law) were lost at an early period, a fact which may be accounted for by the great use made of them in the churches. The copies made, perished in their turn, and for similar reasons. Yet, the more the conquests of the Gospel were extended, the more necessary became these copies, and the more they were multiplied. Hence arose that multitude of manuscripts in all the ancient languages, and also, as a natural consequence, the great number of alterations involuntarily made by inattentive or unskilful transcribers. It rests with us, therefore, to compare those manuscripts which remain to us, to learn to distinguish between a more pure text and one which is less so, to show with clearness, precision, and impartiality, the difference of the versions and the nature of the variations; and all this can be done without the inquiry being hostile to the word of God itself. But Rationalism has confounded two very dissimilar things, and has created this confusion for the promotion of its own opinions. We can very well conceive of labours having for their object the history and criticism of the original text of Scripture, which would by no means depreciate their origin and intrinsic value. The criticism of these variations itself ought neither to shake the faith of the conscientious inquirer, nor to alarm his piety, since they are an authentic testimony to the integrity of the text; as in reality, and according to the most severe critics, it is now generally believed that they concern only things of very secondary importance. Thus the history of criticism may be considered as independent of doctrine; but so many questions depend on this history, that, for example, of the degree of credibility due to the evidence of the authors of this text, when the idea of inspiration is abandoned, that of the time when they are thought to have written, their object in writing, whether they are to



be understood in a natural, literal or figurative sense,—so many questions, I say, depend on the history of this text, that it is not astonishing that Rationalism should have employed sacred criticism to invalidate the authority of the books which condemned its religious views. There have always been, in the different ages of Christianity, some laborious men who have undertaken the task of ascertaining the pure text of the sacred books; but as they did not possess the scientific resources of our day, it is not surprising that they have left much yet to be desired.

Some progress had, however, been made by the Protestants of the reformed communion. We see how, aided by the labours of Reuchlin and Erasmus, Calvin, Theodore de Beza, the Stephens's, Buxtorf, Le Clerc, Grotius, and Wetstein, threw on the history of the text and of antiquity the light of a sound criticism, and how, far from shaking the authority of any of the canonical books, they, on the contrary, strengthened the foundations on which they rest.\*

But it was not the same in Germany, when the works of these reformed theologians became known there, and when the no less remarkable labours of the English Protestants, which appear to have equally contributed to form a foundation for further undertakings, were added to them. When the difficult field of criticism was entered upon in Germany, the first essays, it is true, were modest; and who would not appreciate the efforts of the learned Bengel to give to criticism a reasonable direction? But soon all limits were disregarded, and, destroying one thing after another, the mind arrived at the complete annihilation both of the supernatural and historical elements of all the contents of the Bible, and especially of the Testament of the New Covenant. Nevertheless, in what relates to the history of the text, without regard to its authenticity or interpretation, it is impossible not to acknowledge the eminent services rendered by Professor Griesbach. Resuming the labours of Bengel and of Semler on the different readings, he completed them by his ingenious system of recensions, of which the Alexandrian held the highest place in his estimation. This system, it is true, has been invalidated by later labours, which, however, it will always be an honour to Griesbach to have called forth.† In fact, during the years 1782-88, there appeared at Riga, a Greek and

\* Calvin's *Commentaries on the New Testament* were reprinted in 1831, under the care of Tholuck. The last edition of the *Greek New Testament*, revised by Theodore de Beza, is that of 1598. It is more valuable than the first.

† See Proleg. in edit. 2. *N. T.*—*Curæ in historiam textus Græci epp. Paul, S. Meletemata de vetustis textus N. T. recensionibus*, printed in his *Commentarius criticus in textum Gr. N. T.* Jena, 1798. 1811, 2 vols. He had already published, in 1785 and 1793, at Halle, *Symbolæ Criticæ, ad supplendas et corrigendas varr. N. T. lectionum collectiones*, 2 vols.

Latin edition of the New Testament, in twelve volumes, the author of which, Matthäi, of Moscow, carried on the most active warfare against Griesbach, whose recensions by no means agreed with a great number of Russian and other manuscripts, which had been carefully collated by Matthäi. At the same time, besides the edition of F. S. Alter, of Vienna, published with the readings of different Slavonic, Coptic and Latin manuscripts, there appeared that of the Dane, Andreas Birch, for which he, in company with J. G. C. Adler and G. Moldenhauer, had undertaken a long journey to visit the libraries of Italy and Spain, and to compare the manuscripts which they found there, principally Syriac ones. A detestable policy, in the burning of Copenhagen, in 1795, destroyed a great part of their laborious researches.\* From this period, all further research seemed impossible, and the text of Griesbach, notwithstanding much opposition, was at the height of its renown, when Hug and Scholtz, Catholic professors, the former at Freiburg and the latter at Bonn, published, the former a learned *Introduction to the New Testament*, and the latter an edition of the Greek text, which increased by one third the external accompaniment of the text, and gave a new and more complete recension of it. Thus they contradicted, on the authority of new discoveries, the almost fixed system of Griesbach. This has not prevented Protestants, though paying a due regard to the wise observations of Hug and Scholtz, which, however, were not all equally well founded, from receiving with the same favour the text of their fellow-believer. That this is the case is proved by the frequent reprints which have been made, as well as the synoptical harmonies, drawn up by De Wette and Rödiger, which are in the hands of all students.†

\* The *N. Testam.* of Matthäi had appeared at Riga, in 12 volumes octavo, but he published a less voluminous edition in 1803-6, at Wittemberg, in 3 volumes, in which was only the Greek text, with the most important remarks. Birch and Moldenhauer, published their *Gospels* in 1788, with the principal readings from the codes of the Vatican, and in 1801 they were followed by the *Critical Remarks*.

† See Scholtz *Curæ criticæ in histor. textus evangeliorum*; in his *Biblische kritische Reise in Frankreich, den Schweiz, Italien, Palestina und im Archipelagus, in den Jahren 1818-21*. Leipz. 1823; his *Critical edition of the N. Testament*. Leipz. 1830-36. 2 vols. 4to. There seems to be arising, in our day, a new authority, which seeks to dethrone that of Griesbach as quietly as possible. It is that of Lachmann, professor at Berlin, long known as a distinguished philologist, and who, by the publication of his *N. Testam.*, first in 1831, and now by a more beautiful edition, has, in the opinion of many, marked the commencement of a new era in the history of the sacred text.

[For further labours, especially those of Tischendorf, on the text of the New Testament, see *The People's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 7.—E.]

While Lutheranism remained firm to the principle of the inspiration of the Scriptures, it might have been expected that criticism would confine itself within limits, or at least that it would submit as much to the guidance of faith as to that of intelligence. But from the moment when Semler laid aside this principle, and Ernesti suspended its authority, seeing in the sacred books only philological questions, the edifice raised by the reformers began gradually, though at certain intervals, to fall. There are now communities called, from custom, Lutheran, but neither Luther nor Melancthon would be able to recognise their members as brothers in the faith. It would be infinitely better that Christ should recognise them as his disciples. As it is impossible for us to pronounce judgment on the masses, we can only affirm that those cannot be recognised by Christ, who labour to found a Christianity without him, whether in treating his work only as a last resource, or in placing under his august sanction the dreams of what they call their reason.

Freed from the obstacles opposed to theologians by the ancient doctrine, the adherents of Semler's system undertook the task of accomplishing, by means of science, a reconciliation of theology and philosophy, and of strengthening rationally in the minds of men what they termed the Christian sentiment. Their labours were admirable, if we look only at the material results; for they show an indefatigable activity of mind, and an uncommon extent of knowledge. They first continued to submit to criticism the formation of the canon; the history of the text afterwards became the object of the most scrupulous researches; and, finally, the sources of the sacred monuments were always explored with great sagacity, exempt from prejudice; although they had said that notwithstanding the silence of the symbolical books respecting the canon in itself, those who compiled them not only admitted it entirely, but granted also to certain books, afterwards considered as apocryphal in the Protestant church, an authority equal to that of those books the authority of which has never been proved.\* It was not until after their controversy with the Romish church that the Protestants felt the necessity of forming the canon of the Old Testament in the same manner as it had been done by the Jews. It was generally thought that the Alexandrians, universally confessed to be an enlightened people, and whose testimony ought to have great weight, did not admit those books which are excluded from Protestant Bibles. Semler was of a contrary opinion, and pretended that the Alexandrians finally incorpo-

\* In the *Apology for the Confession of Augsburg*, the book of Tobias is actually quoted as evidence.

rated them with the canon. This error of the father of Rationalism was refuted by Eichhorn himself,\* with his usual talent, but he does not sufficiently show that the errors of Semler had their source principally in the syncretistic spirit by which he was governed. But it was of little use to fix the canon, when the authority of every book contained in it was afterwards to be disputed. One of those who exercised most talent on this subject was a man remarkable for all the qualities which form a writer of high merit. I speak of Michaëlis (Johann David), who was born in 1717, and who, in 1739, had already obtained the title of doctor of philosophy by a learned dissertation on the antiquity of the Hebrew points. He soon became celebrated in classical and oriental literature, and in 1751 filled the office of Professor at the University and Secretary of the Academy of Sciences recently founded at Göttingen. His scientific reputation, principally for knowledge of the oriental languages, was so widely spread, that during the seven years' war the French troops acted towards him as those of the empire had acted towards Fénelon during the war in Flanders, and the Academy of Inscriptions at Paris were pleased to admit him to the number of their corresponding members. Michaëlis owed this reputation, not only to his talents as a professor, in which capacity he was admired for the richness of his ideas on all subjects, but still more to the great number of his works, all of which tended to throw light, by means of philology and history, on a great number of questions referring to all departments of oriental literature. Thus while in France the most ill-timed jokes were made upon the Bible, Michaëlis made it the object of his brilliant labours, and compelled the admiration even of those who did not understand him. We should consider as among the most important of his works, his *Mosaïsches Recht*,† a book displaying laborious research, and fitted

\* *Historische Untersuchungen*, &c. In the *Repertory of Oriental Literature*, v. 217.

† Professor Cellierier, of Geneva, has made known and improved this excellent work of Michaëlis.

[The *Mosaïsches Recht* may be found in an English version, by Alexander Smith, D.D. 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1814. The more recent literature of the subject may be found in the *Select List of Theological and Religious Works*, appended to the second volume of *The People's Dictionary of the Bible*, to which, for works on many other departments of theology, spoken of by Mon. Saintes, we refer, rather than increase the bulk of our volume by accumulated references. Two valuable publications, however, as being recently published, may here be mentioned, namely, *Das Mosaïsche Recht*, von Dr. J. L. Saalschütz. 2 vols. 8vo. Berlin, 1848; and *Zur Bibel Naturhistorische Anthropologische und Medicinische Fragmente*, von J. B. Friedrich. 2 Theile. Nürnberg, 1848. A valuable introduction to the whole of the Bible, by Professor Scholtz, in which good use is made of the



to take from the hands of the detractor of the Pentateuch the pen with which he was about to soil its pages. But it was not the will of heaven that Voltaire should know the German literature of his period; and hence the inheritance which he left to France was only the poor ideas of English Deism, accompanied by the jingling of the bells of folly. We may next mention Michaëlis's *Einleitung ins Neue Testament*, so rich in materials, but, at the same time, so suitable to make still wider the path already opened by Semler and Ernesti, in treating of the authority to be granted to the sacred books; for its author made of profane history the same use as Ernesti had made of profane philology. In this Introduction, indeed, he frankly adopts the colours of Rationalism, in depriving, on his own authority, two Evangelists of their claim to inspiration, while he acknowledges that of the other two. It is true that Michaëlis thought that he should better establish the veracity of Matthew and John by denying that of Mark and Luke, whose narratives appeared to him to contradict those of the others. Had he examined them more attentively he would have found out how trifling these contradictions are, and that they concern only the details of a fact, and never the fact itself; thus his arbitrarily circumscribed theory of inspiration would have fallen to the ground. It is a singular thing, that the most distinguished writers on criticism seem almost always to have made up their minds to reject one of the fundamental principles of faith, not from historical testimony, but in consequence of systematic prejudices, as in the case of Semler, and only in order to escape a difficulty of discussion or examination. Michaëlis, to render his views somewhat more plausible, takes a great deal of trouble to weaken the testimony of antiquity. But who could decide better than the members of the primitive church on the degree of authority to be granted to the works of two disciples of the apostles? And who will ever believe that the whole of Christian antiquity was deceived concerning the value of the books contained in the New Testament? The supposition of Michaëlis is, however, so little likely to raise difficulties on the subject of contradictions, that one contradiction relating to a fact is sufficient to make him enlarge his theory, and deprive his

materials of late years supplied for the illustration of the Scriptures by History, Philology, and Archæology, is to appear in an English translation, as one of the works in *The Library of Christian Literature*, edited by the author of *The Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. References of great value on this, and on most topics of religion and theology, may also be found in a work which no biblical student, reading German, should be without, namely, *Biblisches Realwörterbuch*, von Dr. G. B. Winer. 2 vols. 8vo. 3rd edit. Leipzig, 1847.—E.]



two favourite evangelists, by a stroke of his pen, of a part of the privileges which he had so graciously accorded to them. Thus he disputes their freedom from error when relating historical facts, though he grants the truth of their inspiration when they treat of matters of doctrine.\* Here, then, we find two important books of the New Testament, which have always been venerated by the church equally with the others, rejected from the canon, for the sole reason that we cannot resolve accessory and apparent difficulties, while the theory of inspiration is strangely circumscribed for a reason as little satisfactory. Of what use are talents and learning, if, notwithstanding their assistance, their possessors are content to cut away difficulties instead of solving them?

In his dogmatical works, Michaëlis seems himself almost terrified by the boldness of his criticism, and we find him employed in reconstructing, as well as he can without too evident inconsistency, the doctrines founded on the facts which his criticism would disprove. And this, apparently, is the reason why Hase said that Michaëlis was not made for dogmatism.† It is true that he makes no difficulty about differing from the symbolical books, but the supernaturalist principle is never attacked even with his semi-pelagian prejudices. The most distinguishing characteristics of his *Compendium*‡ are its order and clearness, and especially the choice of proofs, of which this wise theologian is never prodigal—unlike many of his predecessors, who, by a foolish confusion of demonstrations, arrived at a very different end from that which they had proposed to themselves.

Into this dogmatical field, where the elements of Supernaturalism and Rationalism contest the ascendancy, he was followed by many theologians of a reputation equal to his own; but in exegesis he was soon surpassed by one of his own disciples, who was more bold in his re-

\* *Die Einleitung ins Neue Testament* is known in France by the good translation made of it by Professor Chenevière, 4 vols. Geneva and Paris, 1822.

[The work was translated into English, with valuable annotations, by Bishop Marsh. The third edition, which is before us, bears date, London, 1819. Hug's Introduction, before mentioned, appeared (London, 1827) in 2 vols. 8vo, translated by Dr. Wait. Since this translation, the learned author has published a fourth edition of his work, in 2 vols. 8vo. Stuttgart, 1847. Among other introductions to the New Testament of recent origin, that of Professor Guerike deserves mention, *Historische-Kritische Einleitung in das N. T.*, 1 vol. 8vo. Leipzig, 1843. Two recent English works of more than ordinary merit may here be referred to, namely, *Principles of Textual Criticism*, by J. Scott Porter. 8vo. Simms and M'Intyre, 1848; and *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by Dr. Davidson. 8vo. Bagster and Sons. London, 1848.—E.]

† *Hutterus redivivus*, 4th edit., p. 46.

‡ *Compendium theologiæ dogmaticæ*. Göttingen, 1760.

searches than his master ; I mean Eichhorn. But, before we proceed to speak of the labours of this brilliant disciple of Michaëlis, we must recal the dogmatical tendencies of those who loved to confine themselves to his feeble Supernaturalism, and wished to pass for *biblical theologians*—a title which will be desired by many after them, but which will never be so well deserved. These were, first, Carpzov\* and Walch,† who deviated little from the ancient system, but who are, we see, less careful to support the doctrines on the authority of the formularies ; and, next, Döderlein and Morus, who show more sympathy with the results of the recent exegesis. In vain does the first attempt to keep a just medium between the ancient system of doctrine and that demanded by the severity of criticism. He allows himself to incline too much to the side towards which he is led by his affections.

His *Institutio Theologiæ Christianæ* is, however, read by all parties, on account of its literature and the diversity of opinions contained in it.‡ The *Epitome Theologiæ Christianæ*, published by Morus, is remarkable for the elegance of its style and the moderation of its decisions against its adversaries, and for the skill displayed in satisfying the demands of the innovators without shocking too much the principles of the ancient church. Its great principle is, that it is necessary, in religion, to confine ourselves principally to that which has a truly practical utility. We may judge of the mildness of his orthodoxy by the following definitions taken from his *Epitome* :—“ Revelation consists only of new instructions given on objects which the human reason could neither discover nor demonstrate. The inspiration of Scripture is not the same in all the books of the Bible, and where it does exist it is merely a preservation from error.” It seems to be his reason which makes him consider as the result of an actual poisoning by the fruit of a tree, the fall of man, related in Genesis ; and it is his reason also which allows him to speak boldly respecting the moral powers remaining to man after his sin.§ Nösselt had a much less supernatural tendency, and so weak does he seem to be after the general considerations of his apologetic work, that he is disposed to yield to the first opponent

\* *Liber doctrinalis theologiæ purioris*. Brunswick, 1768.

† *Breviarium theologiæ dogmaticæ*. Göttingen, 1775.

‡ Professor of theology at Jena, Döderlein devoted himself alternately to exegesis and to dogmatical and moral theology, in which he had equal success ; but the work which does him most honour is his *Institutio Theologiæ Christianæ*, which has passed through six editions. He forms, with the doctrines of Reinhard, the transition-point from the ancient to the modern supernaturalist doctrine, which most nearly resembles that of the innovators.

§ *Epitome Theologiæ Christianæ*. Leipz. 1789. Proleg., sect. 2, § 1 ; sect. 4, § 25. Part III. § 6, 10.

who may come forward. Reinhard, in many of his works, was more decidedly biblical and more like Döderlein, though we have already seen that he deprived the sacred books of a portion of their authority, and thus seemed to hesitate unwillingly between the established formularies of faith, whose support he disdained, and the authority of the Bible, which was shaken by the criticism of his contemporaries. He has been justly blamed for not taking as decided a tone in his doctrinal works as in his sermons, especially in the latter part of his life, when he attacked with energy and a certain degree of eloquence the Neologism which was appearing on all sides. He then, in opposition to his earlier opinions, considered Rationalism not as an effort for the better interpretation of Scripture, which true and pure Supernaturalism really is, but in its true light as an usurpation of the rights of that Gospel which alone deserves to be listened to without appeal when it addresses itself to our conscience. He showed that the principles of the two systems cannot exist together, and he thus contradicted, by an indirect confession, what he had written on the power of the human reason to arrive at the truth.\* Schott also was one of those biblical theologians who laboured with sincerity to strengthen the walls of the temple, without thinking of recalling God, who had already been banished thence by more daring men. For, after all, of what use is it that Schott acknowledges, as he says,† a revelation, if he attributes to it no special object? A good judge in this matter, Hase, goes even so far as to say that the Supernaturalism introduced into Schott's doctrine is so feeble that he might offer it as a proposition of accommodation, not to true Supernaturalism, but to all moderate rationalists. Far different was that theologian who entered the lists against Rationalism, and who proved that, to merit the title of a biblical theologian, it is not sufficient to believe in some of the doctrines of the Sacred Book, but that it is necessary to acknowledge unreservedly the fundamental principle on which its authority rests, namely, its absolute inspiration in matters of doctrine. Hahn proved, by the publication of his doctrinal work,‡ that he wished to banish Rationalism from Christian pulpits, not on account of its heterodoxy on minute points, but because its very first principles are in direct opposition to the faith of the Gospel, and, consequently, the two systems can never meet on the only road which leads to life eternal. But though a supernaturalist in the true sense of the term, he allows him-

\* See his work entitled, *Geständnisse, seine Predigten und seine Bildung zum Prediger betreffend, in Briefen*. Sulzbach, 1810.

† *Epitome Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmaticæ*. Leipz. 1822. We shall hereafter speak more favourably of a work of Schott on sacred criticism.

‡ *Lehrbuch des Christlichen Glaubens*. Leipzig, 1828.

self to take many liberties in the field of doctrine. Thus he accuses the Trinitarians of worshipping three Gods, and he distinguishes between the sin of our first parents, for which they alone are responsible, and the sins which we ourselves commit in consequence of the weakness bequeathed us by them. The weakness is hereditary, but not the responsibility of the first sin. Each man is responsible for his own deeds only. An unjust comparison is frequently drawn between the views of Hahn and those of Augusti, which, though sufficiently vague on the fundamental question of Supernaturalism, in other points go to the extreme of the old theology.\* In the class of biblical theologians must be placed two men of great talents and of the most honourable characters, who, if they did not hold entirely pure evangelical doctrines, yet did great service to Protestantism by their struggles with the common enemy. I speak of Tzschirner and Zimmermann. The first believed that he had discovered a point of contact between the two opposite systems, and that he could thus unite them under one standard. Tzschirner, indeed, brought the two systems together, and with ingenious forced arrangements, which display a very friendly bias, he pretended to recognise in them the same ideas expressed by different words, or, at least, to see in them the same tendency, and consequently the same morality.† This good wish of Tzschirner must, however, be classed with those Utopian systems which show more goodness of heart

\* J. Chr. Wilh. Augusti's *System der Christlichen Dogmatik nach den Lehrbegriffen der evang. Kirche, im Grundrisse dargestellt*. Leipz. 1825. Hermann says, with a degree of contempt, for which I myself should not, perhaps, have been forgiven—"On account of their scientific insignificance, the *Manuals* of Hahn and of Augusti deserved to be passed over in silence; but they are the representatives of Supernaturalism in its powerlessness and inconsistencies."—(*Geschichte der Prot. Dogm.* 73.)

† *Briefe veranlasst durch Reinhard's Geständnisse*. Leipz. 1811. The leading idea in this book is erroneous: the revelation which he wishes to be accepted in the first place by the two parties, is the re-establishment of the religion of reason (*Bestätigung der Vernunftreligion*) by means of a divine messenger. The gift of the Gospel is of a different nature to this. See also his *Vorlesungen über die Christlichen Glaubenslehren*, published by Hase, after the death of the author. Leipzig, 1819. Dr. Röhr accuses him, with justice, of having singularly modified the notion of Rationalism in his wish to bring it nearer to Supernaturalism. (*Briefe über*, &c. 1st Letter.) Many pamphlets were published for and against what was termed the inconsistent syncretism of Tzschirner; and as to his name was joined that of Reinhard, the title of Rationalist of revelation (*offenbarungsglaubiger Rationalist*) was bestowed on the latter.

[An exact and learned treatise by Tzschirner, entitled, *The Fall of Paganism* (referred to in the next note), is announced in the series of publications designed to illustrate and confirm the evidences of Christianity, namely, *The Library of Christian Literature*.—E.]



than genius in their authors. But it is only just to acknowledge that the superintendent of Leipzig had very great talent; and the active part which he took in all the great questions which agitated the period in which he lived, shows that he understood his age, and that he wanted only a good knowledge of human nature to enable him to seek from the proper source the remedies which it needs. What advantages we should have reaped from his zeal, if, less pre-occupied by the chimerical dangers of the Protestant Church, he had not always made it the aim of his labours to ward off those dangers; if he had rather consecrated the rich gifts which he had received from Providence, to the sole propagation of the principles which are the best pledges of every political revolution! A skilful theologian, an eloquent preacher, and, when necessary, a distinguished legal writer, the Gospel might have found in him a remarkable apostle; but negative protestantism and literature claim his services.\*

On this transition ground between the two systems, we find also Dr. Klein, who pretended that religious opinions, whatever they might be, provided that they possessed a profoundly religious character, might become the bond of union between Rationalism and Supernaturalism. The new edition of his doctrinal work lately published by Lange (Lobegott) is not changed in character, though the editor claims, not only to have augmented, but also to have improved it.† It is a foolish mixture of some feeble supernaturalist principles with a much stronger dose of empirical Rationalism, which attacks all that does not move in the track marked out by Semler, and which Wegscheider would seem to have carried to its height. Certainly, if, in the midst of the polemical confusion which prevailed throughout Germany, on the subject of Rationalism and Orthodoxy, a voice could have made itself heard, and have effected that union which was demanded by Tzschirner and Klein, in common with all true friends of religion and Christian life, it was undoubtedly that of the venerable Planck. During the half century through which his literary career lasted, he never ceased to utter words of conciliation, accompanied by the most convincing evidence which he drew from the history of the church, and which showed his great wisdom; for in the venerable

\* We know Tzschirner in France by means of translations; his *Considerations on Catholicism and Protestantism*, and his *Letters on Religion and Politics*, addressed to different French writers. But I am not aware that his learned *History of Paganism*, and his *Lectures on Doctrine*, have found a translator.

† Dr. F. A. Klein's *Darstellung des dogmatischen Systems der evangel. prot. Kirche*, Dritte Bearbeitung. *Als Hülfsbuch für Studirende verm. und verb.*, von Dr. Lobegott Lange. Jena, 1840. The first edition was of 1822.



professor of Göttingen, moderation was united to consummate learning. But it was not given to wisdom to prevail, and all his labours, undertaken more or less directly for this noble end, not being able to disarm contending parties, did nothing more than gain for him the esteem and respect which his virtues and knowledge deserved, from that small number of men who are to be found in all Christian communities, because they espouse no party, and who render sincere homage to the writer who has, with the torch of history, thrown light on the questions in dispute, even when he has not been able to solve them.

Planck was born in 1751, at Nürtingen, a small town of Wurtemberg. He studied theology at Tübingen. In 1774, we find him, in a Latin dissertation, forming a very just appreciation of Teller's *Dictionary*, which we have mentioned before, and which, though the production of a man conscientious in his naturalist opinions, which he wished to make pass for Christian, was nevertheless the summary of all the presumptions, in which the innovators indulged themselves against the religion of Christ. The publication of the first volume of *The History of Protestant Doctrine* soon drew upon him the attention of all friends of serious studies. On the death of Walch, the historian, Spittler declined to succeed him in a situation which was not agreeable to any of his tastes, but he endeavoured to secure the appointment of his friend, Planck, as his colleague in the University of Göttingen. After his installation in the academic chair, notwithstanding the regularity of his lectures on the different branches of theology, Planck found himself involved in all the important questions of his period, and he always accounted it a duty to bring to their consideration the aid of his enlightenment and experience, without ever yielding to the philosophical Rationalism of the time, in matters concerning the rights of revelation. He had, in this important respect, the rare talent of keeping at an equal distance from the two extremes; and if he did not obtain the satisfaction of pleasing the zealots of the different parties, he acquired the esteem of enlightened men of all Christian communities, of which he more than once received the most flattering testimonials. The ground to which Planck called the theologians of the different parties was that of history; because he thought that Christianity being a fact, the place of which is marked in the annals of history, it is not by conjectures, more or less ingenious, that we shall arrive at a proper understanding of it, but by establishing the facts relative to it on a firm basis. That Planck was right in this must be acknowledged by all who would not favour the cause of idealism, which undervalues history. Is it not true that Christian ideas in general, whether their number be restricted or enlarged, are derived from facts

related in the Old or New Testament? If Christianity, indeed, gives more exalted notions of the Deity, it is, says the Gospel, because he who taught it to us was in the bosom of God; if Christianity assures man, better than any other religion, of life and immortality, it is, says the Apostle Paul, because Jesus bore testimony of them by his resurrection.

It is the same with the divine authority of Jesus, which rests on his supernatural character, and which it is necessary to grant. We might say the same of the characteristic doctrine of Christianity, known by the name of redemption, and which springs from the manner of life and death peculiar to Jesus. Imbued with these ideas, Planck, independently of some writings called forth by circumstances, of which the most remarkable is that published a short time before the celebration of the third jubilee of the Reformation,\* in which he deplores the indifference and scepticism of his time, as much as the false tendencies of Rationalism and of the revived Pietism,—imbued with these ideas, I say, he devoted himself more especially to the study and teaching of history, whose light he thought peculiarly well adapted to clear up the misunderstandings of theologians. He wrote several works of this nature. We may mention, first, his *History of Protestant Doctrine*, the principal aim of which is to explain the true nature of that doctrine, by disengaging it from some heterogeneous elements, and by showing what human reason ought to respect as the pure expression of the divine word; and, next, his *History of Christianity at the time of its Establishment by Jesus and his Apostles*, a work which may be regarded as the portico of a vast monument which, conceived by his enlightened but incomplete Supernaturalism, Planck wished to erect to the glory of the Gospel. He proposed to lead, by this historical demonstration, all religious parties to a reconciliation. The task which the writer here undertook was noble and beautiful, it was immense, and the vast knowledge displayed in his writings proves that he would not have been unequal to it. Why, then, did he renounce an undertaking which would have struck such a blow at philosophical Rationalism, by proving its entire absence from the history of Christian piety? Perhaps it was on account of his advanced age, perhaps also in consequence of the cold reception given to his best works by the organs of the different religious parties, and especially by those of Rationalism. The language of Planck, however, is far from being that of a friend of darkness; it is eminently that of a friend of knowledge: and if he repeatedly insists on anything, it is on the necessity of uniting know-

\* *Ueber den gegenwärtigen Zustand und die Bedürfnisse, &c.* Erfurt, 1817.

ledge and faith. We may even say that he sometimes assigns a too prominent position to the former; and we should be astonished at the want of success of his writings with the advocates of Rationalism, did we not know that posterity alone does justice to moderate authors.\*

We must also number among the biblical theologians whose remarkable spirit of conciliation has not always been shared by the fellow-labourers of Tzschirner, the celebrated Zimmermann, who founded, at Darmstadt, the *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung*, which continues to spread throughout all parts of Germany the Rationalism, in a modified form, of Röhr and Wegscheider, and often defends it with a violence of expression which forms a contrast to the tone and habits of its learned and eloquent founder. Zimmermann wished to oppose to religious indifference, and what he called the exaggeration of parties, a compact force of frank and pious theologians, who should silence disputation, and join in what they admit in common, to crush the enemy of faith and of piety. To attain this end, he asked only one thing from the theologians of the different parties, namely, the recognition of the rights of religious liberty and of individual conscience. Where we seek something definite, said he with perfect good faith, there also is the Kingdom of God, however different may be the ways of entrance to it. These are brilliant reveries, which, however, could never be realised. We cannot grant to discussion a place in the domain of science, in virtue of free inquiry, the vital principle of Protestantism, and have at the same time peace in the sanctuary. Can we imagine the court preacher of Darmstadt himself presenting his hand in a truly fraternal manner to a man whose injurious opinions he had, in his character as a journalist, been combatting just before? Could he say, I have proved it is true that you are an enemy to enlightenment, and I have pointed you out to my country as a man dangerous to religion and morality from your doctrines of redemption and justification by faith; but I am not the less willing to communicate at the same table with you, although the communion is the most touching sign of the union of hearts and sentiments? This will suffice to show the impracticability of such intentions.†

\* Ammon reproaches him, with some justice, for having passed over in silence, in his writings, doctrines and facts which divide the parties, and on which Planck ought to have explained himself with frankness. See *Magazin für Christliche Prediger*, vol. iii. part ii. p. 22. But this is no reason why the *Archives du Christianisme*, published at Paris, should speak of "the haughty and intolerant criticism of Planck, Röhr, and Wegscheider"!!

† We find, in *Religion et Christianisme*, of M. Vincent de Nîmes, vol. ii. p. 21-26, some considerations of Zimmermann on the subject in question.

And finally, we must rank in this class of rationalists a writer who has endeavoured to describe true Rationalism, of which he makes Jesus the author, and true Supernaturalism, which he attributes to the invention of the apostles. We can imagine such a conclusion in a geometrical or even a political question; but on one relating to interests so sacred as those of the soul, to take no part is to doubt, and then we should either confess it frankly or keep silence. This duty is the more imperative still when it is a man of honourable character who thus throws minds into uncertainty.

It is an undisputed fact that Böhme, in order to give some degree of credit to his distinction between the religion of Jesus and that of the apostles, declares the first to be represented by the three first Gospels only, and the second by the Epistles of St. Paul, which comprise, according to him, the period of transformation of the teachings of Jesus. But if this arrangement is agreeable to the ideas of the author, it by no means follows that it also agrees either with history, which establishes the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, and assigns to it the same rank as to the synoptical ones, or with our knowledge of religion as a whole, in which we find no disparity between the ideas contained in the Gospels and those of the apostolic epistles.\*

We will terminate this list of biblical theologians, who occupy more or less all the neutral ground which separates the two camps, by mentioning a work of great importance, both from its tendency and from its scientific form. This is the work of the consistorial counsellor Böhmer, in which the author imagines that he remains on the ground of Supernaturalism, while he endeavours to weaken considerably the idea of a primitive degeneration of humanity, without which evangelical Christianity would lose its significance. But a good judgment of his work† can be formed only after reading the second part, which is to contain the essence of his doctrine, and which the author has not yet thought fit to publish. But, at any rate, attention is due to a system which seems to claim a certain degree of kindred with the ideas of Schleiermacher and the form of Twisten, and the only aim of which is, like that of August. Neander, the elevation of free Christian science (*freie christliche Wissenschaft*).

Two theologians alone remained frank and consistent Supernaturalists, because they were truly biblical. They made no concession to

\* *Die Religion J. C. aus den Urkunden.* Halle, 1825. See also *Die Religion d. Apost. aus den Urk.* Halle, 1829.

† *Die christliche Dogmatik oder Glaubenswissenschaft*, dargestellt von W. Böhmer, Doct. der Theol. und zeit. Decan der evangel. theolog. Facultät zu Breslau. Erster Band. Breslau, 1840.



the innovators, nor did they attempt to silence them, save by the exposition of truths clearly revealed in Scripture. These were Storr and Steudel, who, after Bengel, were the most brilliant stars of the evangelical school of Tübingen. That University is now making a new effort to re-establish the religion which is no longer attacked under the form of Lutheranism only, but under whatever denomination it presents itself.

Versed in all knowledge necessary for a good theologian, as skilful in interpretation as in philology and dogmatism, Storr was also an able logician; and Kant, who was conversant with human nature, and who so often despised the objections of his adversaries, not only took a pleasure in reading the works of Storr, but almost acknowledged himself to be defeated, when he admitted the importance of his opponent's objections to the results of his critical philosophy, and alleged his advanced age as a reason for not answering him, as he had intended to do. We may then consider Storr, notwithstanding the merit of his young friends, Süskind and Flatt, who followed in his footsteps, as one of the pure representatives of a Supernaturalism full of faith and of knowledge. If the influence of the new systems of sacred criticism was not perceptible in his doctrine, it was not because he was ignorant of them. He had examined them, and had considered the strong and the weak side of the objections. He was a friend of Griesbach, whom he accompanied on his journey into France, and in whose society he explored the libraries of Paris. He appreciated all the labours of that theologian, but he nevertheless took a different direction in his critical investigations. His dogmatical system, which he withdrew from the yoke of all existing confessions of faith, was the expression of a biblical doctrine which the orthodox consider as the best of its kind. Some prefer Steudel, as being better versed in the philosophical sciences, and because, being possessed of a fine talent for writing, he softens by a happy choice of expressions what, with Storr, he finds himself compelled to admit as Scripture truth.\*

The rationalists owe him their thanks for having combatted, as not biblical, some of the doctrines which the symbolical books admit as such. They also consider him as a speculative philosopher, because he wilfully subjects biblical doctrine to the crucible of the human mind. But that is precisely the task of the true biblical theologian, that is to say, of the supernaturalist, because if the Bible contains truth only, and truth is made for man, every biblical doctrine should have its root in

\* *Die Glaubenslehre der evang.-protest. Kirche nach ihrer guten Begründung, mit Rücksicht auf das Bedürfniss der Zeit.* Tübingen, 1834.



our nature. That theology will be true, that is to say eminently biblical, which is founded on the instincts and wants of which we are conscious.

The attempt at conciliation however, proposed by Tzschirner, had found an echo among the theologians of the two parties who pretended to be biblical, and there appeared a succession of pamphlets, approving or refuting the principles on which the agreement was to be founded. Those published by Sachse, Köhler, Klein, Kelle, did not long outlive the circumstances which called them forth; but the letters addressed on this important subject to a young theologian, by C. F. Zöllich, deserve to be mentioned on account of their Christian and philosophical spirit, although, indeed, the author opposed the projected reconciliation as contrary to all the ideas which we ought to entertain of the two systems.\* According to Zöllich, the religious faith of all the nations of the earth was founded on facts which attested the relations of man to God. Deism, on the contrary, presents itself only as an individual religion; it is not a popular religion. Rationalism takes possession of this individual religion, and clothes it with biblical expressions; but as it addresses itself only to the intellect, and leaves the heart unmoved, it is without power, without influence to discipline the people, without unction to alleviate the troubles of life, without the necessary characteristics of a popular religion. Having no faith in the fact of a divine revelation made to humanity, it is deprived of a powerful means of awakening slumbering consciences. The supernaturalist, on the contrary, can speak with authority, supported as he is by a revelation which he can justify at the tribunal of impartial reason. This justification is easy to him, when he recollects that the final aim of revelation is to give, not only a purer knowledge of religion, but still more the *living faith* which is produced by this knowledge.

The intellectual and moral dispositions of human nature are the subjective conditions of religious faith. Reason, the moral will, and the conscience, concur to awaken in us the desire and the want of faith. These qualities of human nature cannot manifest themselves, nor can we imagine them in their activity without the real idea of a Supreme Being, the legislator and sovereign judge of the beings whom he has created.

The empirical element at first takes possession of the sensuous nature of man, and of his inferior faculty of knowledge, of his sensitive perception, of his memory and imagination; it is true that the under-

\* *Briefe über den Supernaturalismus, ein Gegenstück zur den Briefen über den Rationalismus.* Sondershausen, 1821.

standing, judgment, and reason, act in us at the same time with more or less power. Our sensuous nature is such, that when in a state of activity, it leads inevitably to religious faith. Not only do we, by means of reason, discriminate between good and evil, but we feel ourselves penetrated and governed by one or other of these two powers; we approve it or we reject it, but we do not remain neutral, and this is ordained by our moral sentiment. This sentiment is the first source of religious faith. Religion is then primitively an affair of human feeling, not of the understanding or the reason. Morality and sensuousness are the general and primitive qualities of the human sensations. They exist in close union and exercise a reciprocal influence. There is, then, an innate moral sense, or, to speak otherwise, a natural moral sentiment. Sensuousness, or the inclination of man to well-being, does not show itself as an animal instinct; but there are connected with it feelings of a desire of what is right, which we cannot consider as a secret act of reason, but as the effect of the moral sentiment, which comprehends, at the same time, the feeling of our rights and of our duties. By this moral sense man feels himself to be a citizen and member of a society, the fundamental law of which is justice, and the government of which tends to realize a perfect harmony between virtue and felicity. It is thus that we are directed towards religious feeling and faith. This explains why, among the nations of antiquity who exercised their reason in matters of faith less than we do, that faith depended more on the sensible part of man, or at least on his inferior power of knowledge and perception. It follows that the true principle of religion ought not to be sought in the reason only, but directly in that which constitutes the sensible part of man, the moral sentiment and the conscience. Revelation soon harmonises the interests of reason and those of the sensations, the cause of truth and that of faith, by presenting the idea of pure reason, viz., Monotheism, under a sensible form, acting on the imagination: thus it gains the interest of the human heart, and confirms the faith of an entire nation. Thus revelation, taking into consideration the relation existing between natural sensation and the faculty of knowledge, exercises a practical influence over religion, without waiting for the assistance of human reason to support faith. But we judge of the utility and necessity of revelation by laws which do not concern it, when we suppose that its aim was the higher culture of the intelligence, or when we lay down the idea of pure Deism, as decisive of its divinity and its truth. Revelation was not sent to give man a better theory of religious ideas, but to influence his morality and his religious faith. The general idea which we should entertain of it is, that by it we perceive the whole of what the Deity has done to establish the prac-

tical influence of religion, to preserve it, to propagate and to call into action the sentiments of fear, love and confidence towards a superior power. It is true that this idea does not necessarily imply that of an inspiration in itself, which would deprive the messenger of God of liberty and independence of mind, but this fact does not weaken the truth of the theory. The true supernaturalist does not the less receive the canon of Scripture, because he there finds the realisation of all the promises of revelation.

The appearance of Christ upon the earth is the greatest event in the history of revelation. It has an historical grandeur of which nothing can deprive it. Jesus, in fact, presents himself as the most noble and most elevated personage of humanity. He has, over the moral world, a degree of influence never possessed by any other. Even in our days he exercises a great power, which constitutes the whole force of religion, and which we should not dare to wish to destroy.\* Sacred Scripture shows him to us as the manifestation of God in the flesh, attested by his superhuman works, as well as by the teachings which give to the world a most powerful impulse towards regeneration. The beauty of his character, the simplicity of his demeanour, when working the greatest miracles, in a word, all his proceedings, which were totally devoid of affectation, and yet full of majesty,—all these things cannot be explained physiologically, if we regard him merely as a man like ourselves. Behold him always calm and reflective, without the least of that turbulence so generally seen in enthusiasts, and with a sanctity of life which defies all accusations. Do not look upon him as a mere mortal; if you do, you will not be able to conceive how he could form the idea of a plan which should embrace the whole of humanity, how he could speak calmly, and with perfect assurance, of seeing that plan realised, notwithstanding his death, which he predicted, and which, far from retarding, would, on the contrary, aid in promoting its success. Yes, the life of Jesus is nothing more than an historical enigma, if he were not, as he himself declared, the Son of God.† But if his moral character is such that it repels all idea of deceit, it follows that his

\* We shall hereafter see the attempts to destroy it, made by Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, and others.

† [See this subject treated under various aspects in *Illustrations of the Divine in Christianity*, by the Editor of *The People's Dictionary of the Bible*, 8vo. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. London, 1849; also in the same Author's *Life of Christ*, forming part of his *Biblical Reader*, a popular introduction to the study of the Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, intended for schools, ministers' classes, and families. 12mo, 1849. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.—E.]

teachings should be received by us as divine, even when we cannot fully understand their meaning. For we ought to be convinced that nothing revealed to us by the reason of God is contrary to the portion of reason with which he has endowed us, but that it is only above our understanding, which will not remain for ever in this state of inferiority.

The theory of revelation, as received by the church during eighteen centuries, if we strip it of certain externals, in which men have been pleased to envelope it, is too reasonable not to be preferred by the supernaturalist, to the Deism under which Rationalism has concealed itself.

## CHAPTER V.

HISTORICO-CRITICAL RESEARCHES—KANT COMES TO THE AID OF  
THEOLOGY—HIS RELIGIOUS SYSTEM.

IN the midst of this revolutionary movement in the domain of sacred criticism, which had been excited by Ernesti, Semler, and Michaëlis, and which could not fail to be fatal to doctrine, since an edifice from which the foundations are taken away must necessarily fall, the powerful lever of history was employed to overthrow what had been spared by the tooth of criticism. There appeared historical treatises and laborious dissertations, the essential aim of which was to demonstrate historically that Semler's ideas were not the fruit of his fantastic imagination, but the product of an elevated and sincere mind. The hypothesis of accommodation was an especially favourite idea with the rationalists of this period. In a thousand ways they sought to prove that the sacred writers and the teachers who immediately succeeded the apostles, in their discourses as well as in their actions, only condescended to the superstitious weakness of their contemporaries, who could not have borne more solid nourishment, which modern rationalists profess to give. In this they said that Jesus had set the example to his disciples, and had displayed a high degree of wisdom in giving to his contemporaries only so much light as they could endure. They added that these accommodations, which were to yield in time to other more useful instructions, were perfectly honourable, and were to be excused on account of the noble end which was aimed at.\* We may easily understand what latitude would be given to doctrine by a principle so elastic and yet so arbitrary.† Teller soon showed this when, in his dictionary of the New Testament, he made so deplorable an application of the principle.‡

\* See the *Neues Magazin* of Henke, vol. ii. p. 638. F. A. Carus, *Historia antiquior sententiarum Ecclesiæ Græcæ de accommodatione Christo imprimis et apostolis tributa*. Leipzig, 1793. See also a dissertation by F. V. Reinhard: *Utrum et quando possint oratores divini in administrando suo munere demittere sese ad vanas hominum opiniones*. Wittenberg, 1784.

† We can see this influence on doctrine in Henke's critical history of labours for the history of the church, in the 18th age of his *Hist.*, Part I. p. 189.

‡ *Wörterbuch des N. T.* Breslau, 1772. His historical and critical researches



This, indeed, he had done eight years before, in treating with so much indifference all matters of doctrine not included in his ideas of the Rationalism or Naturalism, called enlightened by his friends, of the *German Dictionary*. A writer of mediocre talent, and a very ordinary preacher, we can explain his renown and the high clerical dignities with which he was invested, only by the boldness of his ideas and his mode of presenting them under a religious appearance, which imposes on the vulgar, especially when supported by the powerful but perfidious hand of public opinion.

It is certain that the history of the church before this time had been merely a barren chronicle of facts, and the deeds of the orthodox doctors, with the somewhat bitter account of opinions called heterodox by the ruling party, though not always so if judged by the Gospel. But, instead of improving this false method of writing the history of a vast society in which two elements are at work, that of life and that of death, where a contest is going on between holiness and immorality, the results of which ought to be reflected in the august mirror of history, for the instruction of those who consult it, a new polemical system was substituted for the old one, and no real change was made save in name. Even the vast extent of the knowledge of Henke has not saved from oblivion the greater number of his historical productions, because they were destitute of that interest which an historian of religious matters can derive only from that life in God which polemical writings cannot foster.

And of what use is ridicule of the doctrines of others, when we are in want of a clear and impartial account of the past? Yet Henke could not refrain from it when he gives the names of Christolatry and Bibliolatry\* to attachment to ancient dogmas as well as to the principles of the reformers on the inspiration of the Scriptures. It belongs to our age, said he, to clear the Christian soil of all these obstacles—to cut away all these superstitions.† Some writers, however, kept free from

are in part contained in his doctrinal work (*Lehrbuch des christlichen Glaubens*), 1761, a work rendered interesting by the condemnation of the magistrates of Helmstädt, but which, without this blaze of celebrity, would have fallen much sooner into obscurity. Teller (Wilhelm Abraham) was born at Leipzig, in 1734, and died at Berlin in 1804.

\* [We here see the source whence Coleridge, Blanco White, and their imitators, borrowed this phrase, by the aid of which, in a truly iconoclastic spirit, they have striven to destroy the reverence for the Bible, forgetting meanwhile that the spirit of true philosophy to which they make pretensions, is discriminative as well as respectful and cautious.—E.]

† Henke, *Linimenta instit. fidei Christ. Historico-Critica*. Helmstädt, 1793. We need not say that *The General History of the Church*, by Henke, will always

this infatuation. We may mention Schroeckh, the author of the *General History of the Church*, written in the style of the French Fleury—a somewhat heavy work, but impartial, and impressed with a simplicity which shows a great love of truth; Walch, who wrote the history of religious disputations, and kept at an equal distance from both parties, while he faithfully reported their opinions; and Spittler, who in his religious opinions was a follower of Francke. But politics, rather than theology, formed the principal object of his labours, and he has left, as models of their kind, summaries of the *History of the Church* and of the *History of the Popes*, which display a rare talent for observation.

Among the most active destroyers, on the ground of historical criticism, is Gabler, a pupil of Griesbach and of Eichhorn, who, following their example, devoted himself to the study of all the various branches of oriental literature. We find him, in 1780, engaged in teaching Exegesis in the University of Göttingen. Being at a later period nominated to the archdeaconry of Altorf, and to a theological chair in that town, he there published the works on Hermeneutics and the *Critical History of the New Testament*, which gained him so much celebrity. He there published, also, twelve volumes of his *Neue Theologische Journal*, which has become the arsenal of rationalistic weapons of every period. Not finding sufficient scope, however, for his activity at Altorf, he exchanged his post there for one at Jena, where he filled the place of Paulus and his successor Griesbach. We here find him giving instruction in the various branches of theology, with all of which he was equally familiar. He preferred, however, exegetical and dogmatical studies, and he can even claim the honour of having been the first to oppose, article by article, a rationalist to a supernaturalist dogmatism. His friends assure us that his horror of scepticism was not less than that shown by Semler of the Naturalism of Bahrdt, and this we shall easily believe when we read how warmly he defended what he called the Christian religion. But his attacks on the ancient faith were nevertheless not free from acrimony, and if he was not always the author of the articles in his journals, yet his was the directing mind, and he was, therefore, responsible for them.\* As nothing, however, could arrest these efforts

he consulted with profit. Braunschweig, 1818, 3rd edit. in 9 vols. published by Vater. Henke died in 1809, in the office of superintendent-general at Wolfenbüttel.

\* His *N. Th. Journal* was commenced by him in company with Hönlein, Ammon, and Paulus, but he afterwards took the whole care of it on himself. If we except his Introduction to Eichhorn's *Primitive History*, of which he was the editor, and his numerous remarks on that work, which will establish Gabler's reputation as a critical historian, posterity will think little of his labours, which the present theology has left far behind.

for the destruction of the Christian edifice, serious philosophy was compelled to come to the aid of theology, thus struggling on its death-bed. But as it was as necessary to repair former evils as to prevent future ones, he, in whom philosophy was embodied, began by rejecting all the ancient philosophical systems, acting in precisely the same manner as the rationalists had done with regard to theology. He thought that, by penetrating into the depths of the moral constitution of man, we should better arrive at the sources of true piety and of pure morality. The man who attempted to execute this noble but difficult task was Emmanuel Kant. And who is there who would not wish that it had been entirely accomplished by one in whom were united such vast erudition and so profound a love of truth?

The examination of the philosophical productions of his predecessors, and particularly of the pedantic dogmatism of Wolf, had shown Kant that the human understanding (*Verstand*) had always been regarded more or less as the principle of human knowledge. He first directed his attention to this foundation of philosophy, which he found very insecure, and he did not hesitate to substitute for it reason (*Vernunft*), as being the faculty of pure ideas and principles. Hence he passed to the conclusion that there are no speculative truths—that the ideas of God, of liberty, and of immortality, were postulates of the practical reason and of the conscience—and the faith which has its source in pure reason is the only foundation of the true Christian church; whence it follows that the Bible, being the truly popular book of religion, must necessarily have for its object to make people moral, and that for this purpose its interpreters ought to seek and can find in it only pure morality, whether clearly defined or concealed under the veil of facts, in the same way that a fable or allegory contains the moral idea which the author wishes to convey.

In order to obtain a reception for his principles, Kant wrote his critique on pure reason (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*), in which he submitted the powers of the human mind to strict examination, in order to learn from them what man can know and what he ought to do—what he can believe and practise. He desired, as the principal object of his efforts, the thorough extirpation of the bad systems of philosophy, which were, according to him, the source of a vulgar materialism. But high as Kant placed reason, he did not rank among its attributes the knowledge of the really divine, and what in general is beyond the senses. He rejected all proofs of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul derived from purely theoretical reason, though he found in it the idea of a perfect being, of liberty, and of immortality; and as he deduced from practical reason only his doctrine of divinity and morality,

Kant thus gave fresh power to Rationalism, since he made this practical reason the true principle of religion and morality, to the exclusion of every other source, and consequently of revelation. We must certainly confess that the intentions of Kant were pure and noble, and that, ignorant as he showed himself of the true constituent principles of human nature in banishing the religious element, he nevertheless placed morality on a respectable foundation. It is agreeable to the moral sense to see a man who proclaims the laws of human morality in an absolute manner, who, without consulting either the desires, the inclinations, or, still less, the material interests of life, demands in all things, and from all, a perfect obedience, notwithstanding the outcries of a corrupted will. Yes, we must confess that in this we find everything sublime that man can teach; but, from a careful observation of ourselves and of others, we shall be convinced that this theory is impracticable, and what is impracticable is not founded on truth. Where the spirit of God is, there is liberty, says the apostle; and in this system of practical reason, falsely called the doctrine of liberty, is there any room for the spirit of God?

It is true that revelation is not absolutely rejected by the school of Kant, but its signification is changed. The religion in which we are obliged to acknowledge that something is a divine command, is revealed religion; that religion in which we ought to recognise a duty before knowing that God has commanded it, that is natural religion. A religion may be at the same time both natural and revealed, if it is so constituted, that a man may and ought to arrive at the knowledge of it by the use of his reason only. In this case the objective religion is natural, the subjective revealed. It is necessary, in all cases, that the revealed religion should be preserved in certain traditions, or in sacred books. It would disappear from the world if it were not from time to time recalled to the public mind; or if there were not in the mind of each man a supernatural revelation continually going on. And this renders necessary a constitution of the church which should be supported by the written word.\*

This is not the place to speak of the celebrity which the Kantian philosophy enjoyed in all parts of Germany, nor to tell how, during a quarter of a century, it raised its altars on the ruins of other fanes erected by philosophy in its own honour,† but it quite belongs to my subject to relate the great influence which it exerted on the fate of

\* See Kant's *Religion within the Limits of the Reason alone*: Königsberg edit., 1793. pp. 63, 122-124, 208-222, 296-314.

† I have entered into all details, in a *History of the Life and Writings of Kant*.



theology. The theologians did not all alike understand the tendency of such a philosophy, which, attacking both the scepticism that admits nothing *à priori*, and the dogmatism which affirms on its own authority that which is above experience, might, contrary to the intentions of its author, conduct to revelation. Those who, according to its method, do not recognise any right of the human intellect to decide in the domain of pure ideas, are nevertheless compelled by their consciousness to admit the religious truths which answer to their moral wants. And hence, making use of a sentence of Pascal, which Jacobi liked to employ, we would gladly say, that if the Kantian reason drives into scepticism, nature conducts to the dogmatism of revelation.

Thus Kant, though he meant only to turn over the ground of philosophy by his criticism, and to form a system of metaphysics which might brave the attacks of the human mind, and thus place beneath the shield of philosophy the essential truths of all religion, which consist in faith in God and the immortality of the soul, gave, nevertheless, assistance to a number of theologians who knew not what means to employ in order to secure the reception by the minds entrusted to their care, of those scriptural truths which they had hitherto believed to be without foundation, either in more carefully studied history or in the human heart which repulsed them.

It was with Kant as with Spinoza, whose system of accommodation had been received with so much favour by Semler and his partisans, and whose ideas on the eternal wisdom of God, as manifested in Christ, form the basis of the doctrine of the celebrated Strauss.\* Kant also saw the theologians seize upon his ideas of revelation, which he considered as “an historical system, containing in many places moral conceptions, and which, therefore, might be transformed into a rational system;” and soon from the pulpit, as well as from the benches of the University, was heard nothing but precepts of Christian morality, accommodated to the imperative demands of the philosopher’s practical reason.

Certainly, when Kant exclaimed, “I know nothing more grand in heaven and on earth than the starry firmament which is above me, and the moral law which is in me,”† he did honour to human dignity, and every one applauded this noble expression of a great mind; but when, in order to establish man’s free-will on an indisputable basis, he attempted with rare ability to show that there is a relation between the

\* This is all shown in the tenth chapter of my *History of the Life and Writings of Spinoza (Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de Spinoza)*.

† *Die Religion innerhalb*, &c. Preface to the 2nd edition.



human conscience and the existence of law, in the same way that there is a relation between right and duty, he confounded that which has been with that which is, and with all his skill he could not demonstrate the actual existence of this relation. This defect is a very great fault in his system. For since all Christianity rests on *actual* inability to fulfil the exigencies of the law, he placed himself in direct opposition to the evangelical faith, and the theologians who followed him in these errors were necessarily hostile to a system which in each of its doctrines contradicted the fundamental principle of Kantian Rationalism. It has been sometimes said that the God acknowledged by Kant, and consequently by the ethical rationalists who profess his philosophy, is only a schoolmaster exercising his pedantry in the human conscience. I would rather compare this abstract being whom they call God, and who, after the manner of constitutional kings, manifests himself to men by his laws, to a capricious and iniquitous despot, unceasingly menacing with his tyrant's rod a human will, which he knows to be incapable of obeying all his commands without his assistance. But if that assistance is given, the character of God changes. He is no longer the God of Kant, but the God of Christians, and thus does Rationalism fly away on the fantastical wings of the imagination. Let us honour Kant for having shown us how we may acquire a knowledge of the powers of the human mind. Let us honour him for having aroused in his nation the sentiment of morality, thus showing wherein consists the true greatness of man. Let us honour him for pointing out the identity of religion and philosophy, by deducing, as a necessary consequence, from practical reason, what he believed to be the essential part of the Christian religion. But, besides misunderstanding the absolute value of religion, which, though essentially associated with morality, yet differs from it, he has, moreover, renewed the Pelagian errors respecting free-will, which are the greatest obstacle to the establishment of the reign of God in the heart, and it was on this point especially that Storr, of whom we have spoken, showed himself strong against Kant, who put off till the Greek Kalends, the time of answering the just observations of the superintendent of Stuttgart.

## CHAPTER VI.

KANTIST THEOLOGIANs — FICHTE, SCHULZE, TIEFTRUNK, HEYDENREICH, SCHMIDT, ERHARD, JOSEPH SCHMIDT, C. L. NITZSCH, STAUDLIN, KRUG, AND AMMON—THE PERFECTIBILITY OF CHRISTIANITY ACCORDING TO THE TWO LAST-NAMED THEOLOGIANs.

THE first work published in Germany in the spirit of the Kantian philosophy, even before the appearance of *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, was written by a young man, who, after being perplexed by many doubts in the course of his studies, sought for repose in critical philosophy. He was so deeply imbued with the moral and religious spirit of Kant, that his work, which was published anonymously, was on all sides attributed to the philosopher of Königsberg. It bore the threatening title of *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (*An Attempt at a Criticism of Revelation in General*).<sup>\*</sup> God, said its author, Fichte, reveals himself to us as a moral legislator, and man has an immediate perception of this revelation. By these two propositions he attempted to fortify his rationalistic system of natural religion, which was soon to merge into a purely subjective idealism, and which left no room for the idea of God, considering him merely as a legislator. The boldest opinion advanced in the book was, that the possibility of a positive revelation, as received by orthodoxy, can be proved only by its contents. But by submitting the contents of a revelation to criticism, do we not condemn it beforehand, and deprive it of its rights? As Fichte, however, confined the judgment of reason to facts which have their correlatives in the region of ideas, he agreed that the two parties, orthodox and rationalist, might fight with equal weapons; the first with their sensitive faculty (*Begehrungs-vermögen*), and the second with their theoretical reason; and that there ought to be peace between them, since both were equally on the way to truth.

Though this work of Fichte's was written with talent, and was in favour of Rationalism, yet, when the first feelings of curiosity respecting it were satisfied, it fell into the back ground, and it was only the ever-

<sup>\*</sup> See some interesting details of the early literary career of Fichte, in his *Life*, written by his Son. I have reproduced them in the *History of Spinoza*, chap. xv.

increasing boldness of its author's philosophical ideas, and the eloquent manner in which he expressed them, that kept upon him the attention of his contemporaries. But the Kantian philosophy was to be further developed, and it soon obtained complaisant disciples, who, more fortunate than Fichte, won for it the favour of serious minds. The theologian who appealed to theology to adopt criticism, was a colleague of Kant, named Schulze, who, by his *Explanations*, placed within the reach of many what the phraseology of Kant seemed to have reserved for the initiated alone.\* A numerous and enthusiastic party was soon formed, and without mentioning those who, as Reinhold, propagated it within the limits of philosophical instruction, distinguished theologians answered the appeal of Schulze, and made Kantism the pedestal on which they erected their new theology, that is to say, philosophical or ethical Rationalism. Among them are more especially distinguished, Tieftrunk, Heydenreich, Eckermann, Schmidt, and Krug, who openly espoused the cause; while Stäudlin, Ammon, Röhr, and Wegscheider, modified the Kantian opinions more or less in applying them to theology.

Tieftrunk was born near Rostock in 1760, and was pastor at Berlin, when, by the publication of some works, he obtained the philosophical chair at Halle, a post which he filled respectably, though he is blamed for the prolixity of his writings. The best of these is, without doubt, that which treats of the foundations of morality, though he acquired most celebrity by his *Censur des christl. protest. Lehrbegriffs*. Tieftrunk had the good sense to reject the expression "natural religion," because he thought that no religious idea could be drawn from nature as viewed through the medium of the senses, and that the natural sciences could not raise us to it. I would rather say that all truth is natural, since nothing is true that is not founded on nature. Thus, all who believe in revealed, believe also in natural, religion, because they know that there is not a truth in the Gospel which does not answer to some want of human nature. But Tieftrunk did not thus understand the matter; he avoided the word nature in his religious considerations only to substitute for it the term reason. He does not say that revealed or supernatural religion is incompatible with the religion of reason; no, he admits the possibility of a revealed religion, and his reasoning is this: the contents of a supernatural doctrine are either of a theoretical or a

\* *Erläuterungen der Kant'schen Kritik*. A strong personal attachment to Kant, joined, we must believe, to a profound conviction, induced Schulze to prove, especially to theologians, that, far from being opposed to them, this philosophy would aid them; that it left perfect liberty to divine things, and did not prevent the development of the Christian faith.

practical nature ; the first kind relating to the increase of our knowledge of sensible nature, the other to the increase of our knowledge by rules, as laws of the will. The possibility which God has set before man of acquiring knowledge beyond that which he possesses cannot be doubted, since this idea contains nothing contradictory in itself. And yet this possibility cannot be demonstrated, because we are ignorant of the laws of supernatural causes. To the question, whether God can reveal to us what is beyond the limits of the human faculties, Tieffrunk answers in the negative, because such knowledge could be communicated to man only by the gift of a supernatural faculty of comprehension. He adds, that, though super-reasonable, this opinion ought not to be considered as unreasonable.\*

Kantism was represented at Leipzig by Heydenreich, who was born in 1764, and died in the beginning of the present century. We are astonished to find him an admirer with equal ardour of Kant, Spinoza, and Klopstock, three geniuses of very dissimilar stamp. But Heydenreich admired the author of the *Messiah* only for the graces of his style, the severe beauties of his poetry, and not for his extravagantly evangelical doctrines. He confessed, however, that the supernatural element in the Bible may be considered as an action of God in the world independently of nature, the possibility of which cannot be disproved by any philosophy.†

Kantism claims as its followers several theologians of the name of Schmidt. One of them was born at Jena in 1744, and died professor of theology in the University of his native town. He endeavoured especially to show the agreement existing between the morality of Kant and that of the Gospels.‡ Another (Joh. Ernst Christian Schmidt) was born in the Duchy of Weimar in 1761, and devoted his whole life to the task of explaining and developing the moral principles of Kant, and applying them to all the branches of the science of the Christian religion. But neither his sermons at Jena, where he filled the pastoral office, nor his dissertations at Giessen, where he was professor of philosophy, gained him so much celebrity as the dictionary which he published for the use of students, of the works of Kant.§

\* *Censur des christlich. protestantischen Lehrbegriffs nach den Principien der Religions-kritik.* Berlin, 1796. vol. i. p. 66-144.

† *Betrachtungen über die Philosophie der Natur-religion.* Leipzig, 1790. vol. ii. p. 192.

‡ *De consensu principii moralis Kantiani cum Ethica Christiana.* Jena, 1788-89. *Christliche Moral wissenschaftlich bearbeitet.* Jena, 1798-1804. 3 vols. Svo.

§ *Wörterbuch zum leichtern Gebrauch der Kant'schen Schriften.* 3rd edit. Jena, 1795.

I must not, however, omit to mention another Schmidt (Joseph), who devoted himself to education, and wrote against the reigning philosophy. Eckermann, whom we have mentioned in speaking of the formation of the Gospels, laboured, in a great number of writings, to overthrow what might yet remain of the ancient doctrines. He desired, particularly, to spread the convenient doctrine of accommodation, knowing well that it would prove more efficacious than the demands of Kantian morality in corrupting a mind animated by the evangelical spirit. He carried the doctrine of fundamental principles so far, that a common faith in the existence of God appeared to him sufficient to unite Christians of all sects under a common standard. He pretended also that Christ's only object was to teach men how God ought to be honoured, and that everything beyond this, which is found in the New Testament, is only an accommodation to the ideas of the time. That was certainly a good mode of teaching how to honour God. Do we honour him in rendering him a superstitious worship? He maintained, moreover, that though the New Testament is authentic, yet it is so difficult to say whether its contents have not been altered, that for greater safety it would be better to make use only of the instructions of Christ, and to lay aside those of the apostles.

Among these theologians we must place also Carl Ludwig Nitzsch, known as the author of a theory of Christian Revelation founded on critical philosophy. He was born at Wittenberg in 1751, and his early opinions were similar to those of Spalding and Zollikofer; but the study of Kant's works gave rise, in his mind, to the conception of a new theology, the principles of which he gave to the world in a great number of Latin dissertations, which form the principal part of his theological weapons. He upheld especially, as did Planck, the principle of an immediate and supernatural revelation; but he ascribed to this revelation only one purpose, that is, to assist the principles of natural religion, to awaken in the world the slumbering religious ideas, and to cause them to be zealously propagated by men gifted with truly divine power. Certainly, no supernaturalist will ever think of denying that in revelation we find what is called natural religion, that is to say, religious ideas, to which we may attain by the use of our moral and intellectual faculties; but he who has eyes to see and a heart to feel, cannot fail to understand that the Gospel supposes, rather than establishes, this kind of truths, and that its proper aim is to announce to humanity an event which has happened in the world, by means of which the world has been reconciled to God. Nitzsch speaks with pleasing warmth of the duties imposed by the moral truth of the



Gospel, but the purest Kantism could, at the best, only drive a timid conscience to despair, or hurry its disciples into the vanity of stoicism.\*

Stäudlin, Krug, and Ammon, to mention only the best-known names, crown the number of theologians who thought that in Kantism they had found a means to re-establish the moral ideas of Christianity, which it was their first desire to see triumph over the loose morality which followed in the train of Naturalism and Sensualism. It is remarkable that Stäudlin, who was insensibly inclined, especially in the later years of his life, to the Christian faith, was nevertheless so infatuated with the morality of his idol, Kant, that he even sacrificed to it the person of Jesus, who, he declared, had taught errors in his system of morals. And yet, with singular inconsistency, which we can, however, understand in minds in which there is a struggle between faith and science, piety and the love of glory, he admits the necessity of revelation for the mass of the people who cannot rise, as do the privileged of science, to the height of the ideal.†

Another warm defender of the Kantian philosophy, as applied to religion, and particularly to Christianity, was the writer who had the honour of occupying for some time that philosophical chair at Königsberg, which had been filled by the illustrious author of the new system. Wilhelm Traugott Krug exchanged, in 1809, this chair for that of Leipzig, which he filled until his death in January 1842. His aim was, by a slight modification in the principles of his master, to establish a transcendental synthetism, which should silence all contradictions. A prolific and impassioned writer, Krug employed all possible methods for the extension of the philosophy of Kant, at the expense of the ancient faith. Sermons, articles in journals, programmes, dissertations, dictionaries, manuals—he wrote in all these forms, and in almost every tone, in order to gain his end. He even condescended to use satire to silence his opponents. After a long life passed in disputation (he was born in 1770), it seemed only just that he should enjoy the fruit of his labours. But we are assured that, with wounded self-love, he regarded with bitter feelings the generation which had ceased to warmly applaud his philosophical dissertations. After strongly opposing the exclusive representatives of authority in matters of religion and politics, he appeared to change his opinions, and agree with them, especially on political subjects, the liberal tendencies of which he condemned; he saw

\* The principal work of Nitzsch, in which his theory is developed, is that which he published under the title, *De discrimine revelationis imperatoriae et didacticæ*. New edit. 1830. 2 vols.

† *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik und Dogmengeschichte*. Göttingen, 1801.

his popularity decline, and was by no means insensible to the decay of his laurels. Next to his *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (*Dictionary of Philosophy*), his *Briefe über die Perfectibilität der geoffenbarten Religion* (*Letters on the Perfectibility of Revealed Religion*) have undoubtedly contributed most to his renown, and have been, in reality, the foundation of the modern systems which admit a perfectibility in all things, even in revelation. In fact, says Krug, God cannot communicate to man perfect and absolute knowledge, because he does not change man's nature, that is to say, he does not convert a finite into an infinite mind. But from this principle we cannot infer the necessity of the perfectibility of revelation. We can easily suppose God revealing only a part of his attributes for example, and, in so doing, he would not change our finite nature, but would leave to the development of our faculties our continual advance in this knowledge; and yet we could never say that what has always been true has become more true by the free exercise of our faculties. And is it not a flagrant contradiction to admit a revelation, (for Professor Krug will by no means sacrifice that expression,) and then to suppose that when the moment of perfectibility shall arrive, we are not to expect a new one? In this system it would appear that, at each evolution of the human mind, he only can make men realise it who was the author of that which preceded; and where will divine revelation stop? I know that professors of Rationalism are not alarmed by these consequences; but they must entirely change the idea of revelation as it has always been received, and they would act more honourably in rejecting it altogether. We can conceive of perfectibility in relation to an individual only so far as his intellect becomes developed, and to humanity, so far as that the productions of one age ought necessarily to be to succeeding ages the means of more easy comprehension. But to say that the object of the human mind is itself perfectible, in other words, that the objective of the religious sentiment which we suppose to be revealed by God is capable of perfectibility, only shows a wish to confound all our ideas, and to impose upon our reason contradictory notions, in its own name. The application which Professor Krug makes of his system to the Christian religion, may be summed up in the motto to his work, which he has taken from Professor Haffner, of Strasburg, "It was not the design of Jesus Christ and the apostles to present to man a complete system of truths to believe and precepts to practise. They did not wish to mark out for the reason invariable limits which it should not dare to pass. They wished to give to it the first impulse; to awaken it from the deep lethargy into which it had sunk; to point out the

path which it must pursue, in order to arrive with a firmer step, and in a more secure way, at perfection and happiness.”\*

Schleiermacher's opposition to this system is well known, and we shall easily understand it when we become acquainted with his powerful genius, and see that the perfectibility of religion would have been totally inconsistent with his Christology. Schelling, on the contrary, pleaded long and warmly in its defence, and, indeed, we cannot see how, after his recent change of opinion, he could abstain from doing so, considering mythology, as he does, as a necessary stage of transition to the Christian revelation, which he now defends with all the enthusiasm of a pure faith. He teaches its doctrines in the same powerful language which he employed in support of his philosophy of identity. By his side stands Hegel, who, though regarding Christianity as absolute religion enveloped in images and symbols, nevertheless taught that far from possessing the life of the spirit in its origin, the Christian church had only a presentiment of it. There is, however, some sense in the words in which the most advanced disciple of the left side of Hegel's school expresses his disapprobation of the system of Krug and Ammon. The perfectibility of the race, says Feuerbach, is as little infinite as that of the individual, since finite power, the only faculty with which man is endowed, can produce only a limited effect. A period, therefore, must come when mankind shall arrive at an historical principle that shall fix its limit; but then the life of Christianity will be over, the thread by which it was united to humanity being broken by the same power which formed it, viz., the human mind.

The theologian who has maintained this doctrine with greatest success in our day, while believing that he remained faithful to the philosophy of Kant, with which his earlier works are imbued, is Christoph Friedrich von Ammon, who was born at Baireuth in 1766. After filling in succession the chairs of philosophy and theology at Erlangen, he, in 1813, undertook the office of court preacher at Dresden, a post which he still occupies with continued success. While von Ammon professed the doctrines of the Kantian philosophy, he

\* Haffner, *Briefe über Erziehung*, p. 52. In reading these words we naturally ask ourselves if they agree with the rationalistic system of Kant, of which Krug constituted himself the special defender. We see, in fact, how, in his last letter, the 17th of his work, Krug endeavours to connect his ideas with those of Kant, who attempted to acquire the plenitude of moral and religious truth, by subjecting Christianity to the crucible of pure reason, and thus drawing out the moral ideal which it contains, and which can never be surpassed. But I should have thought that this idea of Kant, which expresses almost the opinion of Schleiermacher, would overturn entirely the system of perfectibility.

maintained this principle, that truth is to be found, not in sentiment only, nor in forms, nor in the written word, but in self-consciousness, conformed to the laws of our inmost feelings. Under the influence of this principle, von Ammon showed himself to be a Theist in Natural, an Arian in Christian, theology, and in morality he placed the highest good in the conformity of the human to the divine will. He cherished also a strong belief in Jesus as the Son of God ; he made this doctrine the central point of the Gospel, and the divine filiation of Jesus is the only mark by which he attempts to recognise the true Christian. He did not perceive that this is an article of belief which has no direct influence on the heart of man, and which cannot, therefore, be regarded as the main spring of the Christian system. We can conceive that the principle of divine love may be considered as the only essential point of evangelical doctrine, if we make it rest on another principle, that of God's love for men in Jesus, because round this fundamental principle are grouped all the duties the accomplishment of which is facilitated by love, and which cannot dispense with it. But the maxim of von Ammon, which leaves the Christian life in total uncertainty, cannot be established as the general principle of a doctrine which ought not to remain in a state of pure speculation.

But as the favourite system of von Ammon, by which he seems to wish to crown his old age, is the perfectibility of religion, we will now proceed to trace its progress from its origin.

Indications of the ideas on the perfectibility of Christianity recently developed by von Ammon are to be found in his work, *De Origine et Natura Revelationis divinæ immediatæ*," in which he gives an entire theory of revelation. According to this writer, from the moment that a man commences to strive after moral perfection, there arise and are developed in his mind, thoughts and feelings deeply religious, which may be said to proceed immediately from God, since without this moral improvement he could never have acquired this divine knowledge. And the more he rises to freedom in breaking the chains of his physical nature, the nearer he approaches to the holiness of God ; and the more noble part of his nature soars to such moral perfection, that the almighty power of God acts on him no longer through his senses and physical nature, but on his moral character, through the direct medium of his mind. Then, again, he feels the presence of certain ideas which he does not owe to his own efforts ; and while he feels the desire of testifying his gratitude to his divine benefactor, he also feels himself irresistibly called upon to communicate to others the feelings by which he himself is animated. And thus we may see the origin of the immediate revelations made by God to those united to him in an intimate manner,



the subjective character of which is by no means that of excitement or fanaticism, but a firm and certain consciousness that the religious thoughts which transport us are the immediate work of the Father of Light.\* These views must be considered as those of Socinian Rationalism, not those of Evangelical Supernaturalism. The mystical element (I use the word in the sense received in good philosophy) is to be found in Supernaturalism, but does not constitute it. Revelation is one thing, the religious inspiration of ideas in the human mind another. If there were no distinction between the two, there would be as many immediate revelations from God as there are persons accepted in holiness, who listen in silence to the divine voice which speaks continually in their hearts.

It is in his work on the continued development of Christianity that the fragile orthodoxy of von Ammon comes most into conflict with a system formed independently of the Scriptures.† It is true that a perfectible religion seems to have in its favour both good sense and the assent of enlightened reason. We might say with Dr. Strauss, in his recent work, that, “though it appears inconsistent with the idea of revelation when we consider it as proceeding from the Perfect Being, to declare that it must arrive at a higher degree of perfection, yet this declaration may accord with the idea of divine instruction imparted to imperfect beings, who must go on gradually in the work of self-improvement.”‡ Very little reflection, however, will suffice to convince us that this idea of perfectibility cannot apply to the doctrine itself, but only to the manner in which it is understood by the mind and heart. It thus refers rather to the man, who is the receptacle of truth, than to the truth itself. Would it not be highly absurd to say that a truth is perfectible? It could not be truth were it capable of a higher degree of perfection. And yet it is because he believes in the perfectibility of Christianity, that von Ammon considers it as fit to become the universal religion when the only true God shall be known and adored by all mortals. “All the rays of Christianity meet in the true spiritual adoration of God, as in a central point.” “Now,” adds von Ammon, “the true adoration of the Deity is that through which our nature comes into inmost communion with the essence of the Infinite Spirit; and this can exist only in the elevation of our minds into that communion. While we pay our tribute of veneration and gratitude to

\* *De Origine et Natura Revelationis divinæ immediate*. Göttingen, 1797. And *Entwurf einer wissensch. pract. Theologie*. Göttingen, 1797.

† *Die Fortbildung des Christenthums zur Weltreligion*. 4 vols. Leipzig, 1840.

‡ *Christliche Glaubenslehre, in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, &c. 1840. vol. i. p. 254.



him who, freeing us from the traditions of temples and the sacrificial customs of his time, conducted us to the primitive sources of truth, and taught, by his example, how we ought to seek the Father, we nevertheless still see before us, depths of wisdom and knowledge which all the efforts of our minds cannot fathom." And a little further on he maintains that the perfected religion of the mind and the idea should never be wanting in the conscientious teacher of the Christian religion, though he deplores, with an inconsistency common in Rationalism, that free inquiry into the Scriptures, notwithstanding its good effects, has placed the ancient system of the church in a position where it is exposed to continual attacks, which gradually diminish its strength and render its defence more difficult. He hopes that his work, if favourably received, will banish the fear of the schisms by which we are menaced, will diminish the number of dogmatical disputes, and will re-establish in the church the concord so much to be desired. Before we close this list of the principal theologians who were imbued with the philosophical spirit of Kant, let us add that von Ammon, terrified by the excitement created in our day by Strauss's criticism of the Gospels, followed the example of Tholuck and Neander in endeavouring to resist this deplorable attack. This he did, not by a direct answer to the audacious man who would seal for ever the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre in which historical Christianity was buried by science, but by the production of a life of Jesus, which appears to us much better qualified to lead wandering minds into a better path than the earlier works written by von Ammon with a view to the reconciliation of contending parties.\* Nothing can be more judicious than what he says in his introduction of the actual state of science in relation to religion. "If the signs of the times do not deceive us, we appear to have overstepped the limits of our faith and our knowledge, and are now occupied in seeking once more our spiritual equilibrium, our true path." This induced him to write a life of Jesus, which renders to history and to faith what is due to each. This he believes to be the only means, in the actual state of affairs, of preventing a complete rupture between the two great powers of our Christian knowledge, and of fixing the ground on which they may amicably meet. For as deep and firm knowledge preserves

\* *Die Geschichte des Lebens Jesu mit steter Berücksichtigung der vorhandenen Quellen*, dargestellt von Dr. Christoph. Friedrich von Ammon. The first volume only has appeared. Leipzig, 1842.

[The work is now complete. A critical notice of some parts of it may be found in the Editor's *Scripture Vindicated against some Perversions of Rationalism*, in an investigation of the miracles, "Feeding the Five Thousand," and "Walking on the Water," with a Map of the Sea of Galilee. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. 1849.—E.]

us from superstition, and prepares a free way to pure faith, so it is only a history of Jesus free from doctrinal forms which can become for Christians of all communions and of different degrees of intellectual culture, a sure basis of their faith in his doctrine and in his high dignity. In von Ammon's subsequent remarks respecting the conservative principles and the symbols and images which he takes under his protection, in order not to compromise the slow progress of truth, he appears to us to make rather a large concession to those whom he accuses of tumult and destruction. We prefer rather to pass to his wiser reflections on the views through which, in almost all parties and all confessions, the dignity of Jesus has become the foundation of faith in his person. These views not only correspond with the essential contents of the new covenant, and repel the often-repeated accusation that our western system frequently places the oriental spirit of our sacred traditions in the chains of a scholastic and transcendental ontology; they not only have shown the real possibility of an intimate union between the divine and the human nature, and have given the just belief that Christ preserved the divine consciousness even in his inevitable transition to human thoughts; they not only grant to the intimate union of Jesus with his Father an unlimited and infinite elevation,—but they also enable us to allot to history as its inalienable property the facts of the existence and operation of Jesus, which have so often been attacked, and they cause us to recognise, in the development of his mind and the progress of his individual and personal perfection, a higher wisdom of God, which traced out for him the holy path which he should pursue.

I leave it now to theologians who entertain opinions more decidedly supernatural than those of von Ammon, to judge of the following passages, taken from the body of his work (p. 158). They refer to the progress which the Gospel declares to have been made by Jesus when he grew in grace and wisdom before God and before men. "If," says he, "it is certain that Jesus grew in knowledge and in wisdom, and became perfect through sufferings and temptations, that was possible only by the moral direction of his will, which set out from a pathological individuality to draw near to the divine ideal; and it is in this activity of the understanding and of the will that we ought to seek for the essence of his character and of his personal operation. . . . . Where, then, ought the historian of Jesus to commence? Must it be with his superior nature, the idea of which he shall establish genetically? We know nothing of the history of an archangel, and that of the eternal Son of God is lost in its own immensity. The logical and psychological origin of an idea only can become the object of an historical work . . . . . it is, however, necessary that what is essentially divine in Jesus should be

considered as something immutable, which was distinct from his human consciousness, and which could not enter into the field of experience. This granted, there remains for a true and real history of Jesus only his humanity, since we cannot comprehend the superior nature of him whom the Father has sanctified . . . . . but this is no reason why the divine in Christ should be abandoned to all the natural philosophers who proudly confess or deny that which they have never examined, considered, and received in silence." This step preserves us from the temptation of making a distinction between the miracles of Jesus and his doctrine, which inspires us with a just and constant admiration. It reminds all who can read the Book of Light, of the serious duty of every generation—that of distinguishing divine knowledge and truth from the variable forms of any particular period—and teaches them, at the same time, to silence their lamentations over destroyed forms. The past is only a passage to the present, which, again, is the connecting link between the past and the future. That which in the past and present was the means of arriving at something superior, cannot be regarded as the highest aim of our efforts. With such thoughts, we ought to advance fearlessly towards that glorious end, and not be terrified by the excess of zeal with which many defend every post and outpost, as if they were the central point of the body of the army. We will leave them to strike blows on the empty air when the retreat has sounded, and they are too much confused to effect it; a day will come when they also shall enjoy the true light, which they have as yet only perceived in the pale reflection of the letter.

Guided by this faith in the high morality of the Saviour, von Ammon wishes us to acquire the knowledge of his high dignity as the Son of God, faith in which he now, as in his earlier writings, maintains to be the only symbol round which all Christians may rally; and it is by means of the distinction between the letter and the spirit, the perishable and the eternal, which his system of perfectible religion enforces, that he attempts to silence the contradictions proceeding from those of the orthodox party who are behind the spirit of the age, as well as from the impatient ones who understand nothing of the progressive march of humanity.

But neither von Ammon nor Krug is the inventor of this religious system. Besides the gnostics and different heretics of the middle ages, who believed that all had not been revealed by the Saviour, and that the church would receive more ample communications when it should have the plenitude of the Holy Spirit,\* there have in all times been thinkers

\* See *A Treatise on the Critico-Historical point of View of the Perfectibility of Christianity in the Theological Annals of Tübingen*, No. I. p. 1-50. It is written by Dr. Zeller.

who have believed that the human race is constantly making progress towards perfection, and that one consequence of the progress is found in the new discoveries constantly achieved in the domain of truth. Religion, they say, cannot be exempt from this law of nature. Our posterity ought to look upon it in a light different from that in which we regard it, as we ourselves look upon it very differently from those who have preceded us. But, admitting a revelation, what in this case could it have revealed to man? And then do you not see that you insult good sense when, *ad libitum*, you tear out those pages of history which tell you that at the birth of Christianity the first teachers of the church were far from being ignorant on religious matters? And yet, in the system of the perfectibility of religious doctrine, it is necessary to grant that the earliest period of the Christian religion must have been one of darkness. Unless we do so, there would be no progression; the system would have no foundation; it would be nonsense. Semler's opinions on the difference between the essential and the non-essential in religion, on the distinction between external and internal religion, and on the necessity of discriminating between what is local and what permanent and universal, had called the attention of his contemporaries to the possibility of discovering the law which presides over the gradual development of religious truths, as we discover those which govern the development of the physical world. But with Semler this system was not sufficiently clear. It consisted, as yet, only in the gradual destruction of the Judaical ideas still contained in the Christian faith.

## CHAPTER VII.

MODERN SOCINIANS—HOW DISTINGUISHED FROM THE ANCIENT—  
RÖHR, WEGSCHEIDER, DAVID SCHULZ, VON CÖLLN, CRAMER,  
LANGE—HISTORY OF DOCTRINES.

WE need not be surprised that the Christian religion offers obscurities to the human mind, and even confounds all our reason in some facts which it presents to our belief, since we see in nature certain phenomena of which we can perceive neither the cause nor the true end. The very idea of revelation implies, that it reveals to man something which he could not have learned without its aid ; and in him who admits the possibility of a revelation, it would be inconsistent to reject what that revelation communicates to man, although the human mind may not be able to understand it. Yet into what an error do the rationalists fall when they attempt to make for themselves a supernatural Christianity without Christology, that is to say, in abolishing all the demands made on man by the relations which revelation has established, not only between him and God, but also between Jesus, and those to whom he came to reveal the will of his Father ! A fraction of theologians who could not evade the necessity of the ancient principles, without giving support to Paganism, but who were not disgusted by inconsistency, fell into the same error, and brought back into the Lutheran church the most serious of all heresies, because the most fatal to Christian piety. In fact, Socinianism, though admitting a supernatural revelation in the ancient sense of the term, considers Jesus Christ only as a man sufficiently favoured with supernatural and moral gifts, to teach to his brethren faith in one only God, and in immortality, which, without a special revelation, men would never have known. But how can we feel secure of the veracity of Jesus and of the certainty of his teachings, if the character of a mere mortal exposes him to the weaknesses or the imperfections inseparable from humanity ?

There is this difference between the Socinians of the seventeenth century and those of the present day ; the former still kept up some distinction between revelation and divine inspiration, while the latter, more consistent, confound the two ideas. And, however little we



weaken the ancient idea of inspiration, so flexible in its nature, we leave only Naturalism seriously enunciated, with words taken here and there from the Holy Scriptures to fortify its principles. Was it not the Socinian principle to seek and find pure biblical instruction? Was it their fault if, in their conclusions, they went further than Luther and Calvin? They have, perhaps, only been more consistent. We cannot, therefore, find fault with the Socinianism which lurks among a considerable and enlightened body of modern rationalists; and the only part of their conduct at which we can be astonished is the secret horror which they seem to entertain for the name while holding all the opinions of Socinianism. Like them, the Socinians wished for no other foundation than the Bible, and their sole article of faith was belief in Jesus as the mediator; like them, they were devoted to critical labours. Crell and Schlichting have proved it. Without any bad intention, they, too, used their destructive exegesis only to support their truncated doctrine, which they designated by the name of Unitarian, but zero is not unity. Gabler was more sincere, when, being called on to explain his views on this subject, he declared that the Socinians, relying only on Holy Writ, ought to be regarded for that very reason as good Protestants as the Lutherans and the Reformed church. He adds, even, that they are the most consistent of Protestants.\* Among these Socinians, whose name the rationalists refuse, though they receive their principles, we may class all those who do not admit purely and simply the ancient theory of revelation, and who are silent as to the *positive* pre-existence of Christ before his appearance as a man upon the earth. Nor should we be very far wrong in adding to the number the greater part of those theologians who call themselves biblical, since they may very well so name themselves, and profess Socinianism under that convenient cloak,

\* See a Preface of Gabler containing an answer to this question, Are the Socinians Protestants? This Preface is prefixed to a work of Zerenner, entitled, *Neuer Versuch zur Bestimmung*, &c. Lubeck, 1820. The principal object of this book is to show that Socinianism does not admit faith, but reason conducted by the divine word. It presents Socinianism under the most favourable aspect.

[For a view of Unitarianism by Unitarians, see Dr. Channing's *Works*, and the *Memoirs of his Life*, by his Nephew. Chapman: London. See also *Unitarianism Exhibited in its actual Condition*, consisting of Essays by several Unitarian Ministers and others, illustrative of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of Christian Anti-Trinitarianism in different parts of the world; edited by the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co. 1846. Also in the form of a pamphlet by the same writer, *A Letter to the Rev. Richard Fletcher, containing a Review of his Lecture on Unitarianism*. London: C. Fox, Paternoster Row. 1849. —E.]

the Bible, which shelters so many men of different opinions, and still preserves the characteristic shades of distinction between them.

But as the preacher of the cathedral of Weimar and the learned doctrinal professor of Halle both claim the honour of preserving the sacred name of Christian, though they do not profess Christian doctrines, and as I know not whether the title of modern Socinian, or that of biblical theologian, which in itself implies so close a connexion with their system, may be applied to their religion of reason, we will be content with simply explaining their theories, and will leave it to the reader to give them a name, which it matters little to us to choose. The only wish that we can form on the subject is to see these men, powerful in words and in knowledge, repudiate their past errors too long persisted in, and, imbuing their minds with evangelical faith, give to youth an example of a renovation of opinions, which would not be lost.

Röhr and Wegscheider had predecessors, I will not say in Edelmann, Bahrdt, and Basedow, who were far their inferiors in knowledge and morality, though the results of their labours were not very different, but in Steinbart, J. A. Eberhard, Teller, Spalding, Jerusalem, Weber, Thiess, Cannabich, Junge, and Niemeyer, who all in their sphere have attempted to exalt their own reason, and to subject to this doubtful power the divine reason, which the Christian discovers in Revelation.\* It is not to be wondered at, that having early become familiar with authors of doubtful reputation, it is true, but whose influence was not the less real, the superintendent of Weimar conceived the project from the very commencement of his literary career, of forming for himself also "a rational Christianity," and of spreading its principles by every means in his power. Gifted with the talents which form a good writer in any

\* It would be useless here to quote the doctrinal works or religious treatises of these theologians, who only survive in history, where we may contemplate the deplorable traces of their labours. They all were connected, more or less intimately, with that coalition of purveyors of enlightenment, who had their head quarters in Berlin, and their organ in the library of Nicolai, and their celebrity at that time equalled that of this *German Library*. The reader may, perhaps, be surprised to learn that Kant, one day entering Nicolai's shop, and hearing a student of the University ask for Jerusalem's *Betrachtungen*, then for the first time became aware that there was an author of that name, while he esteemed sufficiently the sermons of Spalding, the only ones which he had ever read. Niemeyer especially, by his educational works, had a more enduring influence than all the others on the study of religion among young people in Germany; but his reign also is over. It is only to be regretted that his religious instructions for youth were not interdicted by public opinion rather than by order of the civil powers.

department of science, a distinguished orator, and rich in knowledge, he was well qualified to become an ardent apostle of the Rationalism which he declared to be identical with the religion of Jesus. He was scarcely installed in a country cure, in 1804, when he commenced his work, and, unable to confine his zeal to the limits of a single parish, he created for himself a more extended sphere of action, by the foundation of his journals. But he soon perceived that the circle of his readers included only ecclesiastics who stood in no need of conversion, and he resolved to address himself to another portion of the public, to explain to them his principles and to attempt to destroy the last prejudices which might yet remain against the idolatry of reason. With these views, he published his *Letters on Rationalism*, which met with astonishing success.\* The author, without any of the circumlocution common among the greater number of rationalistic preachers, considers Jesus as an ordinary man, whose birth it is unnecessary to refer to supernatural causes; from all his discourses, and from his manner, we see plainly that he is the production of his age and nation; only superior to them in wisdom and virtues.† I would first ask this author how he arrived at the knowledge of the wisdom and virtues of Christ? If he answers by means of the Gospels, does he not immediately see, that Jesus, if only a man like other members of the human family, presents in his life a mixture of fanaticism and imposture, which can never be counterbalanced by some actions or precepts on which Rationalism depends to exalt his moral character? In this case, Jesus would appear to us to be without respect for the authors of his life, whom he treats with less regard than strangers, and he has the inconceivable audacity to wish that he should be considered of more importance than are his father and mother. And many other things are there which would show either unbounded pride or stupidity, without a name in the vocabularies of living languages. It is true that Röhr anticipates this objection in saying that there is much that is obscure in the life of the Saviour; "his origin, his education, the exercise of his ministry, his unhappy end, all are filled with obscurities, *since it is certain* that Jesus was born as other men are born (sein Ursprung war *gewiss* der natürliche Ursprung aller Menschen); but the reason of this is," he says, "that the memoirs which we have under the name of Gospels are written in so

\* *Briefe über den Rationalismus*. Aachen, 1813. The title of the work was followed by this explanation of its purpose. "To amend the dubious and uncertain judgments which have been formed respecting the dogmatical consequences of modern polemics."

† Ibid. p. 26. "He was the hero of humanity in the highest sense of the term."

undecided a manner, and are so little historical in their nature, that we cannot depend entirely upon them in judging of the person of Jesus.”\*

Here, then, we see a man occupying a Christian pulpit, who cannot feel convinced of the certainty of things which all his parishioners know by heart, in order to assist them in understanding those things, and to show them their moral aim. And what right has he to speak to his audience of what the Gospel commands or forbids, if he does not represent him who has enjoined us to announce this Gospel, and to enforce the execution of its commandments? But contradictions and inconsistencies do not stand in the way of the partisans of Rationalism; they know that their system is in all respects only one great inconsistency, and it is not possible for them to be more logical than their system. I speak of them in theory. Nevertheless, it would be well in so false a position, and it would be only just, if they had more regard to those who are more consistent in their views. Of this regard, however, Röhr knows nothing, and all those who do not share his anti-evangelical faith can be only slaves of ignorance, to whom nothing is due. He is thus blamed, on this account, by a less decided rationalist:—“The disciples of Dr. Röhr recognise only two forms of doctrine, that of a simple and lawful Rationalism (their master’s), and that of a very stupid, servile, and literal, orthodox faith, which they cordially despise. Wherever anything else appears, it must necessarily be an illusion which receives from Dr. Röhr, in turn, the names of Schellingianism, Allegorism, Pantheism! His disciples, repeating these significant words of their master’s, spare themselves the trouble of all scientific research, and thus put an end to the matter. They salute with war-cries the modern times which are passing over their heads. As for us, we will continue securely to turn our looks towards the East.”†

It is superfluous here to say, that for Dr. Röhr, and all frank and sincere rationalists, human reason is the only foundation of religious belief, and the Bible is of small consequence, since it was not only written by men liable to error, but we are unable to distinguish between what they really did write, and what others may have added to their works in the course of centuries. There is nothing more positive than that Jesus and the apostles had no intention of founding any religion but the religion of reason (*Vernunft Religion*).‡

\* *Briefe*, 28-30. He adds in a note, with imperturbable *sang-froid*, “The pure rationalist does not then look upon Jesus and religion in the same light as do Venturini and Bahrdt, nor does he criticise the Scriptures in the manner of Paulus,” p. 40.

† Hase, *Streitschriften*, 111-115.

‡ *Briefe*, &c., 14, 24, 419, 428.



We ought, however, to say, that it was not owing to Röhr that Rationalism did not openly avow itself, and separate from the Christian churches. He is too honourable not to see how inconsistent it is with the most simple morality for any one to appear to teach Christianity to the people while possessing no other faith than a faith in himself, and to declare himself an ambassador of Christ to the people whom he came to snatch from perdition, when Christ himself has declared that he acknowledges no such messengers. With these views, Röhr proposed a creed to be substituted for those of the Christian churches. But the other rationalists turned a deaf ear to the proposition, and Dr. Röhr, in his office as superintendent of Weimar, continued to edify his parish with Christological instructions, and to inspect Christian churches which do not share his opinions, or at least do not confess them on the house-top, as Christ enjoins and reason demands.

This confession of faith of Dr. Röhr, which he proposed as the standard round which all the religious men of Germany should rally, was accompanied by a letter addressed to the faculties of theology, in which he expressed his wish that the consistories and governments should conform to his creed. One theologian only responded to this appeal. It was Schott, of Jena; and even he made some reservations. Bretschneider himself condemned the Naturalism which disguised itself under the name of Rationalism, and Hase remarked, in the *Leipzig Literary Gazette* (1833, No. 6), that such a creed might have been signed as well by a Jew or a Mahometan, as by rationalists of the school of Röhr, if for the name of Jesus were substituted that of Mahomet or Moses. Thus opposed by his own party, and humiliated by the silence of others, Dr. Röhr did not yet despair of becoming the pontiff of Rationalism, and he made a second attempt in modifying his creed and colouring it with biblical words which could impose only on the foolish. In this form he published it a second time in 1834. He then allowed Jesus to be a little more than a person remarkable for "actions and a destiny that were peculiar to him!!" (*Dass er durch eigenthümliche Phasen und Schicksale ausgezeichnet gewesen.*) It will be well believed that this manœuvre succeeded no better than the former, because his partisans were unwilling to compromise themselves, and because the absence of zeal, or even a certain degree of indifference in religion, does not always imply a state of hostility in the churches. This was proved in the Canton of Zurich, where an insignificant rationalistic minority, which held the reins of government, attempted to transform a Christian pulpit into one of mythical Rationalism. The astonishing part of this affair of Dr. Röhr is less his proceedings than the silence of the tribunals of Weimar, which might have demanded to



know in virtue of what positive right he claimed the power of occupying an elevated post in a church which possessed its own creeds, when he proposed another which seemed to him to be the only one true and consistent with the rights of reason.

But if rationalists preferred keeping the positions which they had acquired, when Röhr proposed a creed which would have introduced into the Christian churches a sort of line of demarcation, we must not, therefore, conclude that cupidity was their only motive for this determination. They knew that this proceeding would in no way improve their position, that, on the contrary, they would run the risk of compromising it; and this does honour to their character. Could they not spread its principles equally well under the shelter of the Christian formularies which they retained, and which would conceal their expression? So thought even the friends of Röhr. When, on two different occasions, this question was seriously agitated; Is it moral and legal for men called to a situation to fulfil certain obligations, to act contrary to what they have promised by oath, and ought they not to be expelled from the church?—the rationalists, on all sides, united in claiming unrestricted liberty of religious opinion.\* Hase especially distinguished himself by the brilliant originality of his defence and the liberality of his principles concerning discussion.† He did not then foresee how much bitterness from the side of *vulgar* Rationalism the publication of his works would draw upon him.‡

We often hear the faithful adherents of Röhr, to use the language of Hase, oppose the discourses delivered in the pulpit of Weimar to what his adversaries object to in his principles as anti-biblical and anti-Christian. But it is almost a settled thing in Germany that the preacher is quite distinct from the learned man, though they be one and the same person; that the former ought scrupulously to discharge his office, which is to preach to the people the Word of God, and to lay aside in his pastoral instructions his own individual opinions respecting what he ought to affirm and to lead others to believe. We in France recognise no such distinction; but I have so often heard it maintained

\* In 1827, Hahn published, at Leipzig, a dissertation *De Rationalismi vera Indole*, the contents of which excited the zeal of the innovators. In the same way, 1830, a denunciation of the teachings of Wegscheider and Gesenius caused the same question to be again agitated, but without producing any results.

† *Die Leipz. Disput.* 1827.

‡ A short but substantial pamphlet has been published against Dr. Röhr's confession of faith, under this title, *Die sogenannte neuere Theologie*, by a Layman. Dresden, 1842.

by persons worthy of their reputation, that I refrain by prudence from disputing it. A champion of the Gospel, who is very moderate in his work, and appears to profess a sincere esteem for the talents and character of Dr. Röhr, asks why the editor of the *Prediger Bibliothek* and *Magazin* demolishes in these two journals the edifice which in his sermons he seemed so wishful to erect. He afterwards refers to a discourse preached at Weimar on the day of the festival of the Reformation, containing the most formal declarations concerning what is due to the Bible, which it points out as containing the divine word, that ought to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; and then he quotes several passages in the journals of Röhr where he denies the authenticity of St. John's Gospel. What right have you to wish to impose upon us as an oracle of the Holy Spirit the reveries of an unknown personage? Let us see on what foundations the learned editor erects his hypothesis. It is impossible, says he, to attribute to the Apostle John a Gospel which gives a false idea of the person of Jesus, an idea strongly opposed to that presented in the synoptical Gospels. But we may turn the argument, and dispute the authenticity of the synoptical Gospels, for the very same reason that Röhr disputes that of the fourth. We have thus endeavoured to show at once the singular position of a man who calls black white, and white black, and who would have good reason to be very angry (for we do not doubt his good faith) if he were taxed with Jesuitical conduct.\*

We are sorry to find in this, the most decided party of Rationalism, D. Schulz, professor at the University of Breslau, who has in turn discussed all questions of importance on other subjects as well as on that of the religion of reason. The strict Lutheran, Scheibel, has, in fact, felt the weight of his arguments, as well as Schleiermacher, whose conciliatory theology had on him the effect of a soporific draught. But if the blows of Professor Schulz were rather rude, they still were not mortal, and it was the determined rivalry of speculative theology to the falsely-named philosophical Rationalism of Schulz and his friends which seemed most to disconcert him. We must, however, say that the most sensible part of his writings on doctrine is that in which he refutes the extravagant pretensions of ancient Lutheranism, revived by Scheibel and Guericke, and where he defines, according to Scripture, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.† Nor do his exegetical writings want merit; but we there see too clearly the author's intention to make the

\* See *Dr. Röhr und Dr. Bretschneider als Vertheidiger des normativen Ansehens der Bibel*. Meissen, 1842.

† *Die christliche Lehre vom heiligen Abendmahl*. Leipzig, 1825.

Holy Scriptures serve as a foundation for his rationalistic lucubrations.\* A friend of Schulz, and his colleague in the University, appears to have taught with the same views, as is proved by his *History of Christian Doctrines*, which Schulz edited, though the more impartial method which he adopted, of allowing the writers of each age to speak for themselves, prevented him from manifesting his own sentiments so crudely as did Röhr.† More deeply imbued with the spirit of Röhr was that young professor whose father gave him the name of Dankegott, as a proof of his gratitude to God. He was taken away at the early age of thirty-three, in the midst of his career as a professor (Leipzig, 1824), after having given proofs of solid knowledge and an earnestness of character which led him to contend as strenuously against the frivolity of certain rationalists of his party as against what he termed mysticism in the evangelical religion. Besides an interesting work on the morality of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, the pupils of Dankegott Cramer, after his death, published a Biblical Theology and Lectures on Christian Doctrine, which show the false direction which his labours took.‡ “A Protestant theologian,” says he himself, “by conviction and by inclination, I am actuated by the spirit of Protestantism, when I consider it as the spirit of free inquiry and of truth. Whenever I see men bowing to the doctrines of men or to creeds, I regard them as Catholics, and not as Protestants.” This is all very well; but if the writings of the apostles were inspired by God, we ought to receive their contents without discussion. He who does not so, shows himself to be neither a Catholic nor a Protestant, but a Rationalist—that is to say, a Pagan, after the fashion of the sages of Greece and Rome, who also, had they lived in our day, would have made a *rational* use of the Bible, consulting it as they consulted Homer and Zoroaster, and imposing on it a meaning as they did upon the oracles of Delphi, under pain of declaring it insufficient, incapable, and I know not what besides.

On the same path is found also Lobegott Lange, who dedicated a sort

\* We have quoted his dissertation on oral tradition in the formation of the Gospels: he has written others on exegetical questions of great interest, if we consider them only in a critical and philological light. It is to be lamented that illness prevented him from giving and justifying his vote in the affair of Bruno Bauer, which we shall speak of in another place.

† Daniel von Cölln, *Biblische Theologie*. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1836. He himself edited Dr. Münscher's *Manual of the History of Doctrine*. 2 vols. Cassell, 1832-34. To this work Neudecker added a third volume, bringing the history of doctrine down to our own times.

‡ His *Biblische Theologie* was published at Leipzig in 1825, by one Lossius, and his *Vorlesungen über die christliche Dogmatik* was published by Röhr, also at Leipzig, 1829.

of doctrinal system to the Coryphæus of vulgar Rationalism, Dr. Röhr, as a proof, he says, of the most sincere veneration and the firmest conviction of the truth of *biblical* Rationalism.\* But how happens it that with such profound sentiments of veneration for his rationalist predecessors, he insinuates that before his own time the system could not have been raised to a science—an elevation by means of which it might have the more influence over the conscience? His efforts tend, then, to establish that Rationalism contains the pure biblical results of theology, at the same time that it gives a scientific exposition of them, and indicates the principles and rules which ought to be followed in the study of this religious science. This is an honourable intention, but how is it to be fulfilled if we regard Christianity “only as the true mode of educating man, and of making him adore God in spirit and in truth?” Does not Christianity treat first of man’s relations to reconcile him to God by means of redemption, and is not this the centre round which all its other doctrines are grouped? And yet M. Lange takes the title of Doctor of the Holy Scriptures—“Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?” †

But Wegscheider, professor in the University of Halle, has shown more untiring activity than almost any other theologian, in the interests of Rationalism. His *Dogmatik* passed through seven editions, without the least modification of its spirit, while so many systems of theology and philosophy were espoused and given up, and obliged the most intrepid or the most indifferent to do homage to some of them. The doctrinal professor of Halle, one of the best armed veterans of philosophical Rationalism, was the ever-celebrated author of the most widely-circulated system of doctrine known, if we can give the name of a system, above all of Christian doctrine, to instructions in which only the form of Christianity is preserved. The book containing these doctrines, and which, I repeat, is more widely circulated than any other work of the kind, as is proved by the numerous editions ‡ through which it has passed, is dedicated to the *pious manes of Martin Luther*, who, according to the author, has opened the path for us, and has proved by his example that Christian doctrine consists not in the repetition of old dogmatical formulas, but in the presentation of the instructions derived

\* *Anleitung zum Studium der christl. Theologie nach den Grundsätzen des biblischen Rationalismus*, by Lobegott Lange, Doctor of the Holy Scriptures. Jena, 1841.

† John iii. 10.

‡ *Institutiones Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmaticæ*. Halle. The seventh and last edition is of 1833, and contains many additions.

[The eighth edition appeared at Leipzig in 1844.—E.]



from the pure morality and virtue professed by Jesus and the apostles. Luther would be much astonished if he could return amongst us and see how his laborious efforts for the interests of pure views of the Gospel have tended to bring back gnostic Paganism, and he has a low opinion of the intelligence of his contemporaries who tries to convince them of the perfect identity of the principles of Rationalism with those which influenced the reformers. It is doubtless with a view of supporting this assertion, repeated in different parts of his preface, that he begins by rejecting, from the very first, all idea of Supernaturalism, in order that there may be no mistake concerning his exclusively rational opinions, because, he says, every system founded on an immediate revelation from God ought to be reprobated as anti-rational. On this point he disagrees with De Wette, von Ammon, and Böhme, who wished to retain, after their own fashion, the idea of Supernaturalism, and who have only made it obscure. He complacently quotes, on the other hand, a passage from the works of Krug, where it is said that a Protestant Supernaturalist, to be consistent, ought to have, like the Catholics, a confessor as a spiritual guide.\* Rationalism, on the contrary, says Wegscheider, elevates the reason to the summit of glory, since, according to its principles, it is the part of reason to judge and arrange the supernatural revelation which is proposed to it. And in this way have acted those mortals who have been so favoured by Heaven as to perceive in themselves the revelation of the purest religion. They might then well believe themselves extraordinarily inspired, and even capable of producing marvellous phenomena, because the force of mind with which they were endowed was unknown to them. If we proceed on this principle, we can easily explain the lives of the holy men of the Old and New Testaments, and even that of Jesus. The superhuman qualities attributed to the latter in the Gospels ought to be considered only as local prejudices, ideas which prevailed among the Jews of Alexandria and of Palestine, but which are not absolutely true. Thus the summary of all doctrine concerning God and Christ, is that God, the Father of men, revealed himself to them by Jesus as a spirit, and the principal task of theologians is to purify the historical monuments of Christianity from all that they contain, that was peculiar to the age in which they were written and the people who were to read them—an age which is past, and which we ought not to recal by interpretations such as the Supernaturalists give.

When we have read such assertions as these, maintained by a vast number of empty words relating to anything in the world save the question

\* *Philosophische Betrachtungen über den Supernaturalismus und den Rationalismus.* Leipzig, 1827.



at issue, we naturally ask whether, if these writers are correct, it would not be infinitely more profitable to read the *Fable of the Bees* than to turn over the leaves of a book named the Bible, where, to be rationalists, we must be able to find what it does not contain. By reading the *Fable of the Bees*, we shall arrive at the idea of a good Providence; but what sentiments can arise in the mind of him who reads the *Life of Jesus* with all the prejudices of a rationalist? Wegscheider touches upon so many questions and details, that it would be impossible to enumerate them without exceeding my limits. Some of them, however, we must mention. We know already that he denies all revelation from God, excepting that made to us according to the fixed laws of our nature. From this we must conclude that all which we read on this subject in the Old or New Testament must be considered as myths, which the writers have made use of to conceal a natural truth under their envelope, or as the effect of prejudices, which prevail to a certain extent among all half-enlightened nations. So that, whether it is asserted that the revelation was immediate, or that it was made by the intervention of God's angels, such tales are equally without historical foundation. The very names given to the angels show their origin, if the occupations attributed to them are not unworthy of them; this origin shows that the religion of Moses was exempt from this superstition. The voices from heaven are explained away by thunder; the dreams and visions by psychology, and they bear no signs of being true. Finally, the theory of divine inspiration granted to the authors of these accounts is contrary to the idea of a perfect spirit, annihilates individual liberty, and deprives man of all dignity. This theory of inspiration can be explained only by the opinions of an unrefined age, which attributed to the Divinity all that was out of the usual order of things—even every emotion of the mind in any way unusual. And, says Wegscheider, is not this arguing in a circle? They speak to us of revelation, because it is contained in books compiled under the influence of divine inspiration; and then they require us to believe in the inspiration of the book, because it contains the history of a divine revelation. Wegscheider, who reasons thus, has not failed to study his own being, and has not this study led him to recognise facts of consciousness, without his being able to explain them otherwise than by their existence? Besides this, continues he, the diversities of style and of doctrine, the chronological difficulties, and many other things of the same kind which we find in these books, clearly prove that divine inspiration did not preside over their compilation, and, moreover, many of them are not generally acknowledged as authentic. Whom, then, must we consider to have been the inspired person—the copyist or the unknown author?

As for the prophecies, he does not fear to advance any supposition which can declare them impossible in principle and falsified in their application. The prophecies of the Old and New Testament, says he, if we are to believe in them, would advocate fatalism; and even those which we consider as most clear respecting the fate of Jerusalem are obscure, if read without prejudice. Thus we see that Jesus only took advantage of some passages in the Old Testament referring to the fate of the Jewish nation, to apply them to himself, and thus to advance the work of the spiritual kingdom which he wished to found.

I have said enough, I think, to give some idea of the consequences ensuing from Semler's principles. It would seem impossible to descend lower, did we not know that the efforts of Dr. Paulus to explain naturally all the miraculous accounts contained in the Bible, and particularly in the New Testament, are still more calculated to depreciate what the faithful call the Word of God.

But we ought to remark, as of the highest importance in the question of Christian doctrine, the difference between truth in itself, and the manner in which it is taught. As dogmatical Christianity, or Christian truth, which is the same thing, is quite independent of the form in which it is expressed, it follows that we can criticise every way in which it has been manifested to us, without denying the truth itself. The thing on which we pass a judgment is as independent of that judgment as it is of the opinion which we entertain of it. This, say the rationalists, is the case with the Christian religion, so that there can be no system of Christian doctrine, because the opinions formed of Christian truth may and have been criticised, may and do vary. Thus, all we can do is to give a history of doctrines which must be as variable as the opinion entertained of a thing at different times and by different persons. Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations*, which gained him more glory as a writer than any other of his works, would, if it appeared in the present day, be as little noticed as the most mediocre pamphlets which the church of Rome is continually launching against its unheeding rival.\* From this distinction between truth in itself and the form under which it is expressed, arises another, equally true in one way, but false in many cases. It is the distinction which has been established between religion and

\* The best manuals of the history of Christian doctrines, published in modern times, are indisputably those of Münscher, Cölln, and Neudecker, which we have already mentioned; that of Augusti, *Handbuch der christl. Dogmengeschichte*. Leipzig, 3rd edit., 1780; and, above all, that of Baumgarten-Crusius, which is more philosophical, and which unites a wise method with a rare impartiality: its title is *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte*. Why does this learned professor of Jena delay so long in giving the second part of his compendium?

theology, and which leads to the same errors as the former.\* Thus it became an acknowledged fact, that a system of doctrine cannot be the expression of a decidedly true religion, but only a comparison of dogmas presented by single individuals or by an entire church, and the conclusion soon followed, that what had hitherto been considered as Holy Scripture, the Divine Word, the infallible Word, being only a sort of doctrinal system, ought to be judged as the fallible and disputable expression of a truth which it was meant to reveal, and which truth alone is not liable to criticism. But in what does this truth consist, under what outer covering of the letter is it to be found? To discover this is the aim of science; and science only can lead to religion.† Hence, the value of Christian doctrines must, of course, necessarily depend on the idea which we form of religion. Hence, also, all positive religion whatever loses its objective value, and is only what the mind makes it. Idealism and all its consequences naturally arose out of this system; and if the historian cannot say what ought to have been done to avoid such results, he ought at least to relate the causes, and to state their consequences, if he wishes the history of the past to be a warning for the future.

\* Tittmann, *Programm. de Discrimine Theol. et Religionis*. Wittenberg, 1782.  
—Rosenmüller, *de Christianæ Theologiæ Origine*. Leipz. 1786.

† See Schlegel's *Kirchengeschichte des 18 Jahrh*, vol. ii. p. 150, seqq.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FEEBLE RESISTANCE ENCOUNTERED BY RATIONALISM IN GERMANY  
 —KLOPSTOCK—HAMANN—CLAUDIUS—VON HIPPEL—GELLERT  
 —LAVATER—BARON VON STARK—COUNT VON STOLBERG—  
 HERDER—REINHARD—RATIONALISTIC LITERATURE—ZSCHOKKE  
 —CAMPE—DINTER.

THE appearance of Rationalism in modern times ought not to cause any surprise. Under different forms it has existed in all ages of the world, and we may believe that its principle will exist as long as human beings shall inhabit this earth that supports us. It represents in Christianity what scepticism represented in Paganism, that is to say, the human intelligence at war with the divine intelligence. We may invent moderate terms, which shall establish at certain intervals a kind of armistice, a suspension of arms, but the truce is only temporary, and the struggle will be resumed with fresh vigour when minds are awakened from their indifference. But it will happen, from the very nature of things, that one of the two principles will be embraced by the minority in a greater or less portion of the inhabited earth ; because the spread of knowledge will always cause the balance to incline on the side where human nature will find most to satisfy its desire of knowing and loving the truth. The true supernaturalist, he who has not perverted his faculties by a system of human origin, he who relies only on the Divine Word revealed by Christ, cannot for a moment doubt concerning the result. When the dangerous efforts of empirical, socinian or speculative Rationalism shall have disenchanted all minds and left empty all hearts, when the supernaturalists shall have discovered that they must not accommodate religious dogmas to the ill-understood nature of man, but must discover in this very nature, points of agreement with all religious dogmas, when they shall have clearly pointed out the imposing harmony between revealed things and the moral wants of the mind and of the human heart, then reflection will be sufficient to ensure the adoption of a Christianity the germ of which all Christian confessions possess in the symbolical books, whence it ought to spring forth with that power

of reason which imposes silence on the vain instincts of our nature. To this task of enlightenment those ought principally to devote themselves who know how many errors accompany the adoption of Rationalism; but we do not see in Germany, from the times of Semler to our own, one instance in which supernaturalists have clearly comprehended the nature of this task. They have thought to appease the rationalistic thirst for destruction by concessions, not considering that the human mind, once victorious, burns to distinguish itself by fresh conquests, and that having at its command arms appropriate to every cause, it will often prefer through vanity to precipitate itself into the bottomless abyss of scepticism, rather than perform an act of humility which faith may enjoin.

There have, however, been noble men who have made their voices heard in protest against the pretensions of Rationalism, and have early pointed out its fatal tendencies. But these voices, with some rare exceptions, were neither strong enough to be heard above the tumult, nor convincing enough to subjugate reason, nor sometimes pure enough to make vibrate in men's souls that chord of divine love which is the essence of revelation. With this last class, we have nothing to do: but we must give the first place to those who compelled the distracted multitude to listen to the last accents of a doctrine which had been the glory of preceding ages, and which appeared about to die for ever, except in the pages of history. First comes Klopstock, whose religious belief had its source, not in barren polemics, but in the depths of his tender and expansive mind. His Messiah is not only a beautiful poem, of which literature will ever be proud, but it is also an eloquent confession of scriptural faith, which his fine genius knew how to clothe in forms harmonising with the sentiments that they expressed. Hamann, too, was a writer of so much learning, that Germany, a country generally so well educated, looked upon him as a phenomenon, yet gave him only barren admiration. The influence of this "Magus of the North," as he was called, was perhaps limited only by the strict Lutheran orthodoxy, from which he could not free himself, and which ought to have been subservient to the spirit of the Bible. Hamann was at first only a custom-house officer, and earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. He afterwards became a distinguished philologist, a philosopher who knew more of human nature than those who pretend to have minutely and thoroughly examined into it,\* and he possessed an emi-

\* It has even been often said that his illustrious compatriot, Kant, borrowed from him many of his ideas; but his correspondence with Jacobi and Herder prove only their intimacy: and two friends discussing together important questions of philosophy must mutually enlighten each other.



nently poetical mind. He deserted Lutheranism, probably only because he did not find there souls who responded to his generous sentiments.

Hamann would have become the greatest man in Germany, had he known how to moderate his ardour, give more order to his ideas, and more meditation to his works.\* Gottlieb von Hippel was another defender of the ancient orthodoxy who followed the example of Hamann, in doing homage to the founder of critical philosophy, and became very intimate with him, without allowing himself to be overpowered by his influence. Von Hippel's humour gained many partisans, and might have had the happiest influence on the nation, if his love for the goods of this earth had not greatly counterbalanced his love for heavenly treasures; but it was the will of Providence that the humour of the rationalistic writer, Jean Paul (Richter), certainly more fertile and ingenious, should be more esteemed and admired by many readers than that of the orthodox von Hippel. To this number belongs also Claudius, *der Wandsbecker Bote*, at once so pleasing yet so grave, so mild, so amiable, and yet so profoundly moral and religious. He was the most popular of German writers, who did not yield to the influence of prevailing opinions. "I am no lover," said he, "of novelty in religion, and as I have the word of God with me, I keep steady to that word. How much is it to be deplored that people will trouble themselves about fathoming the mysteries of religion! Since they are incomprehensible by our intelligence, they will remain concealed until it pleases God himself to remove the veil." Gellert and Lavater also were animated by the purest evangelical faith; they were esteemed by their friends and their enemies, for their mildness of character and their tender piety, and well do their works in verse and in prose represent them. Who could fail to acknowledge the generous efforts of these two illustrious men? To these we must join also that child of the mountains, whose works and life are remarkable for their simplicity, while they display a spirit of great independence, which he sometimes carried to an extreme. The lively faith in Providence, which was the characteristic sign of his religious life, was not derived only from the contemplation of the temporal blessings with which it had pleased his Heavenly Father to endow him, but from the books of revelation, which he explained only with his heart filled with the Spirit of God. No one can be acquainted

\* Dr. Zeller thinks this eulogium exaggerated. If he does not believe what I say, let him refer to Rosenkrantz and Stäudlin, who think as I do—the first in his *History of Kantianism*, p. 373; the second in his *History of Supernaturalism and Rationalism*, p. 340.

with the character of Jung-Stilling and not do homage to the peculiar position which he took to repulse the neologism of his native country.\*

I know not whether in company with these richly-gifted men I ought to place Baron von Stark, whose equivocal conduct in the later years of his life explains, if it does not justify, the attacks made upon him by both parties, when they saw his adherence to the doctrines of Catholicism. His want of influence arose entirely from the false position which he had chosen. The unbridled Rationalism of his day disgusted him, and desirous of seeing the Lutheran church freed from it, he wrote his *Theoduls Gastmahl*,† which is rather an apology for Roman Catholicism than a defence of the Reformation against the innovators who were corrupting its spirit. This work enraged both sides against him, for parties always go to extremes, and do not fear even the ridicule which they bring upon themselves by the fables which they invent against their opponents. Baron von Stark could not continue a Lutheran after the publication of this book, but as Protestantism admits free inquiry, he also was permitted to remain in the Lutheran church, while entertaining an avowed respect for the Christian opinions of Catholicism, as well as those of his adversaries, who, though Lutherans in name, did not retain one of those articles of faith which Luther had declared essential to be believed under pain of infidelity to the Gospel. The conduct of the court-preacher of Darmstadt was one great inconsistency, but that of his adversaries was revolting and ridiculous. We must not omit to mention the Count von Stolberg, “first a disciple of Plato, a favourite of the Muses, afterwards a disciple of the fathers of the church,”‡ and finally an earnest apologist of the orthodox Roman faith, though he continued to honour his old friends, Klopstock, Claudius, and Herder, who always believed in the rectitude of his character and the candour of his religious belief. I purposely omit to mention, among the number of the opponents of Rationalism, some other men, celebrated in literature, who, in consequence of their antipathy for the cold conceptions of Rationalism, passed to the opposite extreme of Roman Catholicism. Such were Frederic Schlegel and Werner, who became *believers* only after their æsthetical conversion, and who did nothing afterwards for the spread of what they considered to

\* See his *Autobiography*. We should wish to see it in the hands of every man who knows how to appreciate beautiful characters.

† Translated into French, under this title, *Entretiens sur la reunion des differentes communions Chrétiennes*. Paris, 1818.

‡ Madame de Stael, *de L'Allemagne*.

be the truth.\* Though we have already mentioned Herder in speaking of exegetical Rationalism, it would be unjust not to notice his efforts to spiritualize the orthodoxy of Lutheranism, and to gain for it the approval of all his contemporaries. Herder was born in 1724, in Eastern Prussia. After a youth passed in privations, he at last saw a brighter star rise on the horizon of his life, and his brilliant university career at Königsberg early showed that his name would not descend inglorious to posterity. Herder proved himself in turn a skilful theologian, a distinguished orientalist and a poet, even in works from which poetry is in most cases entirely absent. Thus we find him constantly more intent upon inculcating faith by means of his sweet poetry than on implanting it in the mind by the use of powerful dialectics. There are few who are not acquainted with Herder's most important work, that which seems to be the focus which unites all the rays of his genius. He thus speaks of its subject :—"When I was still young, and when the fields of science began to unfold before me all their morning glories, which the mid-day sun of life insensibly effaces, there already rose in my mind this thought; that since everything in the world has its philosophy and its science, why should not that which concerns us more intimately, viz., the history of humanity as a whole, also have its philosophy and its science? All made me think of this; metaphysics and morals, physics and natural history, but, more particularly, religion." Influenced by these lofty thoughts, he wrote his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.† In this work, to which all branches of human knowledge contributed, he unfolds to our view the physical and the moral world, the past and the future, until to this harmonious movement a gentle calm succeeds, to give us repose from the fatigue which we must have experienced from the multiplicity of certain details, the analogy somewhat forced of certain facts, and the pain which we involuntarily feel at not finding in the work of Herder that God whom Bossuet pointed out in his *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*. What a grand work would be produced by a man uniting the qualities of these two eminent writers, Herder and Bossuet!‡

\* I except Schlegel's *Philosophy of History*, which, though written in a dull and heavy style, is worthy of notice for the conformity of his ingenious conceptions to the historical facts of the Bible.

† This work has been translated into French, by M. Edgard Quinet, 3 vols. 8vo.

‡ There were evidently two men in Herder in ceaseless conflict; but the man of the age almost always vanquished, though he did not kill, the man of Christian piety, but caressed him after he had conquered him, and wished to be his friend. The illustrious Johannes von Müller used a characteristic expression respecting this work. "I find all there," said he, "excepting Christ; and what is an universal history without Christ?"

Another writer who, in the field of doctrine and morality, did much to repulse the advances of Rationalism, especially in its excess, was the celebrated theologian Reinhard, whom we have already mentioned. He occupied successively the chairs of theology and philosophy at Wittenberg, and in 1792 was called to the dignity of first court-preacher at Dresden, in virtue of which office he held a great part of the administration of worship in the kingdom of Saxony. Occupying this elevated position, which he owed entirely to his oratorical talents, Reinhard published, among other works, a number of sermons, in a series of more than thirty volumes; but we must say that they are far from justifying his high reputation. And who can expect sermons generally meditated and written on Saturday evening, to be models of pulpit eloquence, or, at least, to take a place as works of lasting value in a Christian library? And yet this practice seems to be rendered necessary by custom among the majority of German preachers; but such demands are more likely to fatigue the man and to kill the preacher than to produce any true edification. Reform, in upsetting every part of public worship, has made preaching, if not the essential, yet more than the principal, thing, and has thus prevented the preacher from having time to construct, from the resources of his mind and his daily observations, discourses of force and utility. Their prolix fecundity is not the only remarkable characteristic of Reinhard's discourses. We see in them, from year to year, the preacher's gradual inclination to doctrine more and more supernaturalistic, until he arrives at perfect Christian faith.\* He openly explains his opinions concerning the great question of the period in one of his works. He there maintains that, in the question of the foundation of the idea of doctrine, Rationalism cannot admit the Scriptures; that, in dogmatical ideas, it does not concern us to know in what the contents of revelation are thought to consist, but only what principles have been the starting point; that between reason and revelation there is no place for a third principle, and that the only consistent men are those who declare themselves in favour of one of the two contending parties.† He speaks as openly respecting the philosophical systems of his day. Though he thought that philosophy ought to be separated from theology, a distinction however rejected by many good men, he nevertheless confessed that the study of historical philosophy could not leave in the mind of the student great distrust of all in the domain of speculation, because we are not

\* He met with almost unexampled success in his *Sermon on the Reformation*, preached in 1800. It was in consequence of this Discourse that he was accused of *outré* orthodoxy. Röhr's sermon, preached in 1839, is the counterpart to it.

† In his *Geständnisse*, and in several of his sermons.



slow to perceive the weakness of every production of the human mind. Thus the result of all his researches, and of all his meditations, was a firm and entire faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and though in his doctrinal system he has made, as we have said, rather large concessions to the innovators on the questions of revelation and inspiration, he has never attempted to impeach the authority of the divine monuments of faith. While engaged in these profound studies, he published the most important of his works, which still enjoy a well-merited celebrity.\* These were the means employed by Supernaturalism up to the commencement of the present century, to oppose the progress of its powerful adversary. Imagination, poetry, the noble qualities of the heart, and pure intentions, these, it would seem, ought to have ensured the triumph of a cause, if that cause deserved to triumph. But poetry is not understood by the majority, and sentiment alone cannot take the place of the other qualities which are necessary to appeal to the whole human being. At this period, Rationalism, now passionate, now gentle; now scornful, even to impertinence, and now austere to rigidity, as was the case with some Kantists, held possession of all the avenues of literature, and, by its journals, was the awarder of celebrity; it had in its favour the whole force of the *Belles Lettres* and the fine arts. This was the time when Wieland, with his epicurean philosophy and light ideas on religion, gave amusement to all loquacious wits;† when Jean Paul touched with an airy religion the chords of a sentimentality whose harmony is pleasing to the sensuous nature of man;‡ when Schiller, the king of poetry, yet saw in Christianity only its objective side, and so indulged in a region he made for himself between the pomps of Paganism and those of Christian worship; while Göethe, an eccentric man,

\* *Ueber den Plan Jesu*, and *System der christlichen Moral*, a favourite work with Reinhard, and the principal aim of his literary activity, 4 vols. 5th edit., 1815. Röhr, having occasion to speak of this work, calls it "a classical work of its kind," though he disapproves of it, and condemns its tendencies. *Briefe über Rationalismus*, p. 41.

† See, particularly, his *Aristippos*, for morals; and the *Agathademon*, for the ridiculously foolish manner in which he speaks of the noble *Theurgos*, a Jew, who had deceived others only after having deceived himself. It is curious to see in the *Briefe über den Rationalismus*, how often Dr. Röhr likes to support himself on the testimony of Wieland.

‡ In the correspondence of Plattner, it is said that Jean Paul was exposed to the persecutions of *powerful stupidities*, and to secret calumnies; "that he was also accused of Materialism. . . . But it was by a consistory! which has the right to be stupid with increase of honour, and wicked with all the more holiness." I quote this passage of Plattner, not because I approve of any kind of persecution, from which my whole being revolts, but to show the tendency of the age, even in the gravest writers.



*par excellence*, the poet of deified humanity, if the word humanity can be applied to the sublime author of so many immortal poems, thus answered his friend Lavater, "that if they would not leave him his own conception of Christianity he would prefer Atheism, since after all there was no very clear idea respecting the two forms of opinion." Göethe was a thorough rationalist; his intellect governed him, and he stifled in his soul, sentiment, without which it is impossible to be a Christian. He whose only God was art, to which he sacrificed everything, paganised by this deification a whole generation of writers, who followed in the direction whither he led. So many different causes, all of which united to rationalise that which is not subject to the known laws of the human understanding, will explain the progressive triumphs of Rationalism in Germany.\* If to these causes of triumph we add the want of unity of action among the superior men whom I have named as the adversaries of Rationalism, and the false impulse given to study in almost all the schools, and that too by men esteemed on all sides, we shall have the key to that which is an historical enigma to all countries foreign to Germany, viz., that the country which justly enjoys a great reputation for religious feeling should be nevertheless in our days the country least *positively* Christian.

Among those who contributed most efficaciously to the spread of the religious feeling distinct from Christianity, and whose honourable character seemed to be a sure pledge of the goodness of their doctrine, the principal were Campe, Dinter, and the mysterious author (now known to be Zschokke) of the *Stunden der Andacht*, in which is described the best religious feeling, but which is almost entirely without

\* Events succeed rapidly. Scarcely were these lines printed when the whole of Germany, from the Rhine to the Baltic, seized the occasion of Schiller's birth-day to claim for him the worship which seems to have replaced that due to the God of spirit and of truth; it is the idolatry with which we reproach the Greeks and Romans that is now spiritualised in the schools, and under the name of genius opposes itself to Christianity. The self-adoration of the human mind will, perhaps, be the last stage of our errors. What will become of the human race called to pass through this new crisis? It is certain that the excess of evil brings either a cure in an entirely new state of existence, or it causes death, and death in the most frantic convulsions. In all the political and literary journals have been published accounts of this *fête* in honour of genius, and many pamphlets have come forth, both from the votaries of this new worship and from those who, seeing in genius only a gift of God, give to him all the glory in a grateful worship. Similar reflections, probably, prompted the ironical expression in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, 1841, No. 112, that religion was jealous of this *fête*!!! Let us hope that of all this exaltation, there will remain only the excellent reflections of Ullmann addressed to the poet Schwab, under this title, *The worship of Genius considered relatively to Schiller and to Christianity*. Hamburg, 1840.

the spirit of Christianity. He who does not thoroughly understand Christianity, and for that self-knowledge is necessary, could not fail to be pleased with a work which, by its variety of subjects, and the warmth of its sentiments, is sure to captivate a serious mind, without, however, satisfying it entirely; for repose cannot exist when we are soothed to rest only by the deceitful sounds of a mere terrestrial harmony. Campe published a great number of works on education, where he so happily accommodates himself to youth, where he gives such wise lessons to parents, such judicious instructions to those who devote themselves to the education of childhood; but where we must greatly regret the absence of an evangelical spirit, which alone could give some savour to the precepts of religion and morality, which he so strongly recommends, and so weakly supports.

With a zeal truly worthy of respect, Dinter also consecrated his whole life to the improvement of schools, but his writings, which bear the impress of a lamentable Rationalism, sought to raise an edifice without a foundation. Dinter early gave himself to the task of forming good schools, and of inducing others, by his writings, to follow his examples. Certainly, if all the world thus undertook a moral task, the lives of many would not be as void and empty as they now are. But we must deplore Dinter's want of the Christian spirit; he loved religion and morality, and wished to make them loved; but what is religion without a belief in moral wants, which can be satisfied only by a set of ideas to be found in revelation alone?

Friedrich Dinter was born at Borna, near Leipzig, in 1760, and he studied in the Leipzig University. He first became tutor to some children, and afterwards pastor of a little town. While exercising the functions of his ministry, he became aware that one of the best means of improving the morality of a parish is to provide it with good educators. That the tendency of the instructions given in the normal institution which he founded in his parish, and in that which he afterwards directed at Dresden, was not altogether bad in its nature, is proved by the fact that the celebrated and venerable Reinhard, who was then at the head of ecclesiastical affairs in Saxony, offered him a superintendence as a reward for his services. Dinter, however, preferred a situation which would not prevent him from taking part in the education of youth. The Christian faith, then, can only reproach him with having read the Bible with prejudiced eyes, and with having published an edition of it for the use of educators, the notes and explanations to which are truly rationalistic, and make it a dangerous book for those who know not how to use it. The success of this Bible was truly astonishing, being greater than that of any other work written in the same spirit.

But what cannot party spirit do? When an attempt was made to show its tendency, and to prove that it was more dangerous than that of Funk, of Altona, whose indiscreet audacity warned the reader against his travestied doctrines, the rationalists took fire, as if the sacred ark had been touched, and the disputes which this book occasioned only served to ensure its success.\*

\* The latest of these disputes took place in 1840, in Holstein. The disputants were the celebrated provost of Kiel, Claus Harms, and M. Wolf, the arch-deacon of the town. It gave an opportunity to Professor Pelt, of the Kiel University, of publishing some of his academical lectures on Protestantism, Supernaturalism, Rationalism, and Speculative Philosophy, in which, among many things that are vague or wanting in conciseness, much that is excellent may be found. The rationalists were much excited by the opinion of the judicious Pelt respecting Protestantism—viz., that to be a religion, it ought to be evangelical, and that it could not be evangelical without conformity to the fundamental articles of the confessions of faith. The learned professor, in one of his lectures, happily defines tradition, as “the Christian spirit of the history of the world.”

## CHAPTER IX.

RE-ACTION OF STRICT LUTHERANISM AT THE JUBILEE OF THE REFORMATION—THESES OF HARMS—CONTROVERSY OCCASIONED BY THEM—MORE RECENT RE-ACTION AGAINST HARMS—THE PHILALETES.

RATIONALISM having now obtained a firm footing in the territory of the church, and having so far gained the favour of the public, as to think itself safe from any attack, prepared to celebrate the jubilee of the Reformation in the midst of its joyful triumphs, and sharpened its weapons only against the Jesuitism of the south of Germany, which was becoming to it an object of suspicion. But suddenly a voice was heard from the midst of the Lutherans, and the enemy, thus taken by surprise, was compelled to make use of the arms destined for another purpose, against the true children of reform, those who remember that it is to Luther that they are indebted for that reform, and not to Semler and Lessing. When we examine the number of pamphlets to which the Theses of Harms gave rise, we cannot understand how men of honourable character could allow themselves to use against the faithful representative of the doctrines of Luther, injurious terms, such as the French liberalism of the Restoration would not have employed against the Jesuitical power. But an angry theologian has no scruples in overstepping the limits of common civility. He does not consider that, in so doing, he furnishes his adversaries with formidable weapons against himself. Every impartial observer of the discussion will address him in the words of a dramatic writer,—“You are angry; therefore you are wrong.” The leader of this movement against the prevailing Rationalism, which made far more noise than that of Hamann and Claudius, was a man whom his adversaries cannot refuse to esteem, and whose brilliant qualities as a preacher must command admiration, when considered in a literary and not a theological point of view. Claus Harms, then archdeacon, now provost, of Kiel, was born in 1778, in a village of Holstein, where his father was a miller. Claus followed the same business, until the death of his parent left him at liberty to devote himself to theological studies. Let those who will, reproach

him with his early occupation ; every enlightened, every right-minded, man, must see in it only another reason for honouring his excellent qualities. We know that at Kiel he has the respect and the love of his fellow-citizens, and time having calmed the excesses of passion, has caused him to be rightly judged, even by those who opposed his Theses. Röhr, who is known to be the editor of the *Predigerbibliothek*, though devoted to the most extreme Rationalism, terminated one of his articles in 1836, with these words, so descriptive of the theologian who now occupies our attention :—"Harms possesses the genius of the heart ; it is from feeling that springs the poetry of his eloquence : and if we wish to reduce to a system this poetry so unsystematic, we cannot find a better rule for it than these words of the author himself—'The heart has its own understanding and its own expressions.' Hence arise that picturesque variety of images, that strong, simple and energetic language, those bold flights, that tone of mind which penetrates, impresses, and absorbs ; but hence also spring those usurpations of sentiment, which too often take the place of argument ; hence it is that we sometimes find colours instead of thoughts, light which dazzles instead of informing ; hence, in a word, are all the qualities which charm, and those defects which also often please, since man, by an instinct of truth, may love even the imperfections of a genuine nature."\* Such was the brilliant individuality and talent of the theologian who, on the occasion of the jubilee, asked himself whether the Lutheran church was about to celebrate the destruction of the word of God by Rationalism, or the re-establishment of that divine word at the expense of the traditions of popery. He searched among the archives of the Reformation, and found no difficulty in proving that Rationalism is only of recent date, and that its features, however concealed in some of its votaries, have nothing in common with the noble simplicity of the Christian faith. To remind the German people of the true spirit in which the jubilee ought to be celebrated, he gave to the public ninety-five Theses, which re-produced textually the doctrine of the reformers on the corrupt nature of man, on the weakness of human reason, &c., with the same crudeness of expression that had been used in the six-

\* This biography of Harms is very well translated in the *Revue Germanique*, 1836, and contains analyses of several discourses which give an idea of the mind and talents of the preacher. Why has no French editor ever undertaken the task of collecting the most remarkable discourses of this distinguished man ? Joined to a selection from the oratorical works of Reinhard, Schleiermacher, von Ammon, Dräseke, &c., they would make France acquainted with a kind of eloquence quite distinct from that of the French preachers, and Catholics and Protestants alike might profit by them.



teenth century. Let us first remark, that the proper and consistent object of the jubilee was to celebrate the triumph of the Protestant principle of free inquiry in religion, and the substitution of the authority of the word of God for the authority of the popes. Thus to mistake the nature of the festival, and to show, moreover, the ill-address of maintaining doctrines respecting the total corruption of human nature, which Luther would never avow in our days, was to expose himself to the attacks of Rationalism; and its numerous satellites did not spare him.\* In the very neighbourhood of Kiel, at Schleswig, at Altona, and even in the parishes under the jurisdiction of Harms himself, an outcry was raised against the revival of doctrines of a past age; and a man of the name of Meyer† actually exclaimed in the heat of his anger, “Tetzel rather than Luther!” He then sought to prove, which was not very difficult, that these fatal Theses were neither biblical nor conformable to the symbolical books. Would it not have been better to commence with this argument? Other declarations followed respecting the principles of Harms concerning the powers of human reason, and the writer had the good taste to declare that they are long and stupid philosophical harangues. Another of these furious opponents, by the name of Schütze, wrote that all those who did not belong to the side of darkness ought to declare themselves the adversaries of the greater part of the principles of Harms, who had collected in his Theses all the confused mysticism of Götze. As for Schütze himself, he consults all the writers in his library, and makes them, however dissimilar, agree with his views, compelling Gellert, Kant, and Spalding, to utter some gross pleasantry, in company with Shakespere and Jean Paul. He concludes by declaring the super-orthodox view (*superorthod-ochsen*) conquered.‡

More serious, and certainly more logical, was the letter addressed to the Archdeacon of Kiel by von Ammon. It appeared in the *Prediger Magazin*, which he then edited. In it were these words:—“You declare that truth alone is your sovereign, and I take leave to account impar-

\* On the occasion of the Jubilee of Geneva in 1835, I wrote the same reflections in the journal *L'Helvetie*, and they drew upon me, from a Vaudois, calling himself a minister of the Gospel, incivilities which he called arguments.

† *Die menschliche Vernunft über und gegen die 95 Theses von Harms.* Schleswig, 1818.

‡ *Gespräche in Bücherzimmer über die von Harms herausgegebenen Streitsätze.* Kiel, 1818, in two parts. It is pleasant to be able to say that a professor of jurisprudence at Kiel, Dr. Falk by name, answered these lost children of Rationalism with much calmness and dignity, and proved to them that the symbolical books, far from being a yoke and a mark of servitude, served, on the contrary, to protect the people from the arbitrary interpretations of the ecclesiastics (*Letter to the Consistorial Counsellor Boysen, &c.*, by Falk, Professor of Jurisprudence).

tiality the best guide in the research after truth. Human reason, which you declare to be of no use in matters of religion, was never, it is true, considered as a constituent principle of religion by pious theologians not unacquainted with science. They have almost always taught that it is powerless for the acquisition of a living knowledge of God and of the external operation of nature—that for this we must employ experience and history. Reason, then, can only teach us respecting God what he is for us, what we are through him, and what we ought to become through him. But it was justly argued that reason ought to be the regulating principle and the organ of religion. Every truth, even in the domain of religion, is to each of us the representation of a reality and of something living, according to the laws of our reasonable nature. Thus knowledge and faith become possible, through the regular action of our thoughts and our judgment; a thousand passages of the Bible speak of this natural knowledge of God, which every uncorrupted human reason is constrained to admit, just as our eyes acknowledge the existence of the sun on which they gaze. Luther even represented to himself the act of revelation as the manifestation of God in the conscience of holy men, because he wished that the Bible should be revered, not as an image fallen from heaven, but as a book rich in divine truths. Hence also arose the consideration shown by the fathers of the church for the religious ideas of Socrates and Plato, which they regarded as flowing from a superior inspiration; hence the judgment of the pious and learned Melancthon respecting the value of the knowledge of God which we derive from nature and from reason; hence that treasure of profound instruction drawn from the theology of nature by all wise men from Aristotle to Reimarus; hence the powerful appeals of the learned Chemnitz, for the union of the study of rational theology with the doctrines of the Christian faith; and hence the agreement of philosophers of the most dissimilar schools in this principle, that without the presupposition of an internal and divine revelation, by means of our own reason, we could not know whether or not an external revelation were worthy of God.” “The question of the connexion between reason and revelation possesses, then, exactly the same interest as the problem of the relation of human liberty to divine grace. As he who denies the latter falls into all the horrors of ultra-predestination, so he who separates faith from reason acknowledges an ultra-supernaturalism, which takes from our minds the liberty of recognising truth, and thus opens wide a door for fanaticism. Common experience teaches, it is true, that the weaker the knowledge the more profound is the faith, and that in proportion to the diminution of faith is the increase of knowledge. For myself, I do not believe it to be God’s will that it should be thus, but

that men themselves are the cause of it, and with them, therefore, rests the blame. A good painter first tries his skill in tracing lines, then in representing the forms and shades, and lastly in depicting light springing from the bosom of Aurora. Many are content to draw all their life with black chalk. What, then, would you have me do?" \* Resting on these principles, von Ammon then passes in review the chief propositions of Harms, from which he dissents, and decides that they are irrational. Schleiermacher even felt himself called upon to undertake the defence of reason against the Archdeacon of Kiel, and we must lament that in this work is wanting that observance of politeness which usually distinguished the learned professor of Berlin. He might be allowed, confounding the exaggeration of Harms with the principles which he defended, to characterise the Theses as "flying shots and devices of fireworks, which would endure but for an instant;" but he ought not to have permitted himself to give the name of hypocrisy to conduct in which Harms was actuated solely by conscientious motives. The ironical tone in which Schleiermacher hints at his hope of seeing Harms return to more just opinions contrasts strongly with the seriousness of his other writings, and causes us to make sad reflections on that human nature the dignity of which he attempts to defend against Harms. It is still more to be lamented that he soon afterwards published a second pamphlet, so far passing the first in invective, that von Ammon felt himself obliged to take up the pen, to call to order one who was already beginning to be considered the oracle of modern theology.† These Theses can nevertheless be regarded only as "flying shots," if we consider that they were not adopted as a groundwork of instruction. It must be said, however, that they induced very many people to examine the question closely; in this respect their influence still endures in Germany, for from the time of their appearance, works have been constantly published, explaining, supporting and developing the propositions first ardently revived by Harms. The works of Luther himself, so long forgotten, have from that period been continually reproduced by the German press.

It is the duty of the faithful historian to mention this happy influence, owing to the indefatigable zeal of Harms, which continued uninterrupted from the time when he was summoned to Kiel from a poor parish in the country, to the day when he celebrated his own jubilee of twenty-five years' activity in the same parish; but it ought not to be concealed

\* *Prediger Magazin*, Part IV. p. 193-197.

† See the work entitled *Sendschreiben an Herrn Dr. v. Ammon über seine Prüfung der Harmsischen Sätze*. Berlin 1818; and the Answer of Dr. von Ammon. Hanover, 1818.

that, though his oratorical talents, and especially the brilliant originality of his expressions and his happy imagery, have collected for him a numerous audience, who delight in his instructions, he has driven others to a closer examination of what had only struck their imagination; and when the charm of poetry has left it, they have been surprised to find themselves under the guidance of principles against which are arrayed all the powers of their faculties. Falsely imagining that the deacon of their church, from his high talents and his virtues, must be the representative of the purest expression of orthodox Christianity, they have preferred a complete renunciation of a religion with which they could no longer sympathise, to a re-examination of the Gospel, and an attempt to find there milder doctrines than are contained in the somewhat heavy symbolical books of which the Provost Harms is the most intrepid defender. Hence arose the society of Philalethes, who profess to belong to no Christian sect, and yet are very desirous not to be confounded with Atheists. The irrational contempt of Harms for the powers remaining to human nature after the fall is not the only point on which his adversaries differ from him. They find another subject of dispute in his expressions respecting justifying faith, which is the grand doctrine of Protestantism, and that which overthrows all the pretensions of the Roman Catechism. On this point Harms expresses himself in a manner which not only could not be assented to by the most frivolous reason, but is also anti-biblical. They quote especially a discourse lately delivered before the Queen of Denmark, in which he is said to have expressly declared that love or charity (*die Liebe*) is not the first commandment (though Jesus declares it to be so), but that *faith* is the first of Christian virtues, since love can spring from faith alone.\* Is there not here a little confusion in the expressions of the eloquent orator, and ought not his adversaries to know that, in the language of Scripture, faith, hope, charity, are three different expressions for the same idea? Must we quote the Latin verse, *ignoti nulla cupido*, to prove to them that we can in fact love only what we know?—is not Christian faith the eye of the soul?—is it not the internal sense by which we see invisible things, become attached to them, and love them? Yes; the Christian doctrine is valuable only because it shows us the riches of the love of God for men, and thus proves that all our laws—those which govern the moral world as well as those which rule civil society—are only arbitrary and opposed to nature, unless they are penetrated by the spirit of the truest love.

\* See a correspondence of Kiel in the *Zeitschrift für die elegante Welt*. 1842. No. 223.



Another complaint made against the venerable Provost of Kiel is, that he is accustomed to introduce political allusions in discourses which ought to bear a strictly Christian character, and that he frequently connects the name of the King or Queen so closely with the august name of the Deity, that it is difficult to discover where the phrase respecting the King begins and where that concerning the Deity ends.\* We would gladly believe that this representation is exaggerated, for we cannot think that a man of honourable character like Harms, however decided his opinions respecting the forms of government, would choose to compromise his ministry, far more elevated than any dignity which court policy could confer, and, by so doing, drive away from the sanctuary those whose different political convictions lead them to wish to exalt only God, law, and liberty.

However this may be, the Philalethes endeavoured to form themselves into a society distinct from Christians, most of the members of which are to be found at Kiel, where it originated in 1830. From this town, as a centre, they seek to propagate their principles wherever their zeal leads them.† Some people have expressed astonishment at this formation of a society avowedly anti-Christian; but why it should cause surprise we cannot understand. There is no article in the creed of the Philalethes which has not been admitted and openly professed by many of those who continue to call themselves Christians, though they no longer retain Christian principles. In the manifesto published by the Philalethes,‡ they declare, in fact, that they wish for no other religion than that the principles of which shall be proclaimed by the human mind, enlightened by philosophy and science; and as neither science nor philosophy can agree with the accounts in the Bible, which Christians of all denominations regard as divinely inspired, they prefer to have nothing in common with Christianity. Thus they not only desert the temples raised by Christian faith, but they abstain from any ceremony—such as baptism, for example—which might actually introduce them into a religious society whose Scriptures and doctrines they alike

\* *Zeitschrift für die elegante Welt*. 1841. No. 239.

† According to the Königsberg Gazette, a similar society has already been established at Berlin. It may, however, be with this intelligence, as with the news of a general assembly of adepts, said to have been held at Hamburg, but of which no one at Hamburg had heard anything.

‡ *Vorläufige Nachricht über den im März 1842 gestifteten holsteinischen Philalethen-Verein*. Printed in the Faubourg St. Paul, in Hamburg, where it appears works can be printed without undergoing the censure of the republic. Here then is one small point on the German soil where the press is accountable only to God and to men's consciences for its formidable power.



condemn.\* These religious opinions have nothing new in them; and whoever reads this history of Rationalism with an unprejudiced mind will conclude, without rashness, that to this result the rationalistic principles must necessarily tend. But the Philalethes, more decided than the Deists, under the convenient cloak of Rationalism, think, with justice, that truth ought not to be confined to a few of the initiated, but that it is our duty, on the contrary, to publish on the house-top what science has revealed to us; and that if the opposition to Christianity is to be effectual, it must descend from the heights of science to the ranks of the people, where it will not fail to find adherents. Not that they have the least wish, say they, to impose on any one whatever their opinions in philosophy or religion, since they proclaim absolute liberty on all subjects with which the human mind is occupied; and then they say that the human mind cannot be treated as the sacred books would treat it. They are a sort of larder wherein all the eternal food of the mind is arranged and prepared. The mind must be left to itself; it wants neither men nor books to prepare for it its nourishment; it desires liberty and free inquiry, without any fear of its consequences. In order to spread these opinions, the mother society has decreed the formation of Seminaries of Wisdom (*Pflanzschulen der Weisheit*) in thirty-five places in the duchy of Holstein, each of which shall send deputies to the general meeting, to be held at Hamburg. It is enjoined on each of the initiated, that by his honourable conduct he shall disprove the charge of impiety which the society has already incurred on many sides; that he shall make as many proselytes as possible, in order that thoughtful men, who yet dare retain the name of Christians, may be drawn from their errors, and that many others who ought to burn with the love of truth may be roused from the slumber of indifference.

We see that the creed of the Philalethes is as clear as it is concise. They have, in fact, none save what is contained in the two following articles:—1st. To the Philalethe alone belongs judgment; he may think and do what he will. 2nd. All that the Philalethe shall think and shall do will be right, because he alone possesses the judgment to think and to act rightly. To recal men from such mental aberrations a voice has gone out from this same Holstein, in a journal conducted

\* The journal entitled *The Pilot* (1842, No. 59), in speaking of this society, says, that it would not dare to report the expressions used by the Philalethes to signify the Lord's Supper of the Christians. "Were we Jews, Mahometans, or even Philalethes ourselves, we would refrain from doing so, through respect for religion and humanity."

by a very intelligent writer, deploring that the country should be abandoned to the influence of the Pope enthroned at Kiel, and that there is no rationalist sufficiently independent to oppose the ancient doctrine of Harms.\*

\* See *Freihafen*; March, 1842, edited by Th. Mundt.

## CHAPTER X.

UNION OF THE LUTHERAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES—PREVIOUS  
EFFORTS IN FRANCE AND GERMANY—PLANCK, TZSCHIRNER,  
SCHLEIERMACHER, STEUDEL, TITTMANN, SCHEIBEL, AND VON  
AMMON.

THE third jubilee of the Reformation had another consequence of great importance. The project, so often formed and as often forgotten, of an union into one church, of the two fractions of Protestantism in Germany, was now revived and carried into effect with almost universal success.

We remember the observation of Leibnitz respecting this division of the two churches: he said that the separation would cease to exist as soon as the principle of free inquiry, contained only in its germ in the establishment of the Reformation, should become a rallying point for most rationalists of all parties. What a truly singular spectacle would it have been to see men who had banished the supernatural element from Christianity, yet continuing in the eyes of the people to profess doctrines which could not agree with those of other Christians! The most reasonable men of both parties felt this, and governments willingly promoted arrangements which it would have been absurd not to favour.

The Prussian government, with great political foresight of the happy influence of such a step on the religious spirit of Germany, published, in June 1798, a cabinet order, in which were expressed, wishes for the union of the two Protestant communions, and the confident expectation that such an union would be effected on so large a scale as to admit all those who, in all parts of the world, acknowledged Jesus as the Saviour of the world. The extraordinary events which immediately followed this order caused the postponement of the realisation of such a project to a more favourable period. Some honourable men, however, thought that the time was come for the fulfilment of these wishes, when they saw the French empire repudiate the errors of the republic, and that its chief, in opening the Christian temples, which had been closed by tyranny, showed no very decided preference for Roman Catholicism.

They imagined that some words in the *Bulletin des Loix* were sufficient to induce Catholics and Protestants to effect that general fusion of churches which reason and religion alike seemed to demand. But Napoleon, indifferent about the doctrinal questions excited by this honourable desire, was pre-eminent as a warrior and statesman, and as such he judged the spirit of his age more justly than short-sighted writers. He saw that the general dispositions of minds, especially in France, agreed with his policy in counselling him to consolidate his own power by means of a spiritual power, which desired nothing better than to conclude with his glorious sword an alliance equally advantageous to both parties. Thus the writers who desired to see this union effected by political agency, and those who more wisely believed that the very nature of things must bring it about, since, says de Bonald, where there is no faith there is no subject for discussion, all these writers were deceived in their hopes, when they saw, on one side, imperial politicians turning away from a question the morality of which they did not understand, and, on the other side, Protestants, notwithstanding the accusations so often repeated against them of no longer believing in positive doctrines, persisting in their refusal to unite with Rome, until Rome should have renounced her superstitions.\*

A German writer was especially distinguished in this affair; though most ardently desirous of seeing an union of worship in his native country, he rejected all these projects and demonstrated their futility.† Persuaded that such an union would be advantageous only so far as it should be the expression of common thoughts, Planck laid down, as a first principle, that tolerance ought to be earnestly practised, that we should be just and moderate towards opponents whose religious tendencies we do not always properly understand, that we should thoroughly study their doctrines in order to discover wherein they differ from or agree with our own, and that while waiting till God in his own good time shall be pleased to unite us under the standard of the same faith, we ought to commence our union in the bonds of Christian charity. These remarks of Planck at this period of religious decline were full of wisdom, and we cannot be surprised at the favourable reception which they met with from Catholics and Protestants who were animated by Christian sentiments. It was, doubtless, with a view to prepare the

\* It would be superfluous to mention all the attempts at union which have been made since the sixteenth century between the Roman and Protestant churches. In Marheinecke, *Institutiones Symbolicæ*, &c., 3rd edit., pp. 81, 82, there is a catalogue of works which treat historically of the subject.

† *Ueber die Trennung und Wiedervereinigung der getrennten christl. Hauptparteien*. Tübingen, 1803.

way for an union truly rational, and therefore truly Christian, that Planck reprinted, in 1804, an historical and comparative exposition of the doctrinal systems of the principal Christian sects, which should not only teach his pupils to take right views of so many systems, that aim at truth by accusing each other of error, but should also show the points of agreement by means of which the different communions might hope at last to unite together.\*

There is, however, a principle common to all Protestant communions, which ought to have united them, notwithstanding their difference of opinion on minute points, when the symbolical books which separated them had lost their ancient authority. And this principle is the pure and simple faith in the authority of the sacred books considered as the rule of belief in the church. A certain time, however, is needed to make the logic of a portion become that of the majority. It was, therefore, necessary that the multitude of works written on the advantages of the union should carry conviction to the minds of those not yet confused by the principles of Rationalism, and even of Protestantism in general. Protestantism as a principle, in our days, is no longer supported by the authority of the symbolical books, but only by that of the word of God. It therefore follows, that if diversity of opinions is once tolerated in a community, there is no reason why the toleration should not be extended on a larger scale. As long as the symbolical books retained their authority, the project of an union was absurd; but when once that authority was set aside, when the Lutherans and the Reformed church recognised each other as brethren in the principle of seeking

\* *Abriss einer histor. Darstellung*, &c. The first edition was published in 1796. This mode of setting forth the doctrines received by the different communions has been frequently imitated, and has contributed no little, especially in Germany, to the destruction of many of the prejudices existing between Catholics and Protestants. First Marheinecke published his *Institut. symbolicæ doctrinarum catholic. protest. sociu. Eccles. Græcæ, minorumque societ. christ. summam et discrimina exhibentes*. Berlin, 1812. This was followed by Winer's *Comparative Darstellung des Lehrbegriffs der verschied. christl. Hauptparteien, nebst vollständ. Belegen, a. d. symbol. Schriften derselben in der Ursprache*. Leipzig, 1824; and Guericke's *Allgemeine christl. Symbolik*. Leipzig, 1839. We must not forget to mention Herbert Marsh's work on the same subject, translated into German by Screiter (*Sulzbach*, 1821), nor the *Symbolik* of Möhler, to which Dr. Bauer, of Tübingen, and Imm. Nitzsch, of Bonn, wrote answers, which, especially that of the latter, made a great impression on many Catholics. Günther, of Vienna, calls it a weighty answer; but, as he was writing in favour of Möhler and Catholicism, he contents himself with adding that he received Nitzsch's work after his own was finished, and when it was too late to remodel it. It is well known that Vertot, when some one brought him better documents respecting the siege of Malta, said, "I am very sorry, my siege is done."



for a rule of faith in the word of God alone, then only hypocrites or ignorant men could oppose an union which would leave each one at liberty to interpret the Scriptures as he might think proper. Anxious as we are to be on our guard in judging of events in which men of such high reputation have taken part, it is yet impossible not to see, from the character which Rationalism had assumed, that, with many, indifference to doctrine was a motive for determination. When we know that the most distinguished and most moral men among the rationalists saw in the established churches only remnants of superstition, which the Reformation had failed wholly to destroy, and that Tzschirner, for example, did not shrink from the idea that a Christian church might comprehend all opinions, as Paganism comprehended all classes of divinities which had their origin in the imagination of the poets,—we must see that a separation between the Lutherans and the Reformers was absurd, and that their union was demanded by simple good sense. After many fruitless attempts, the history of which has been frequently related,\* the appeal made by the Prussian government to the Protestants of Germany was at last honourably responded to. The union was effected, as a ripe fruit of the period, in Prussia, in the grand duchy of Baden, in that of Darmstadt and of Nassau, and shortly afterwards in some other localities, and no very strong opposition was made to it. The least indifferent, as well as those who took part in it, from religious convictions, Schleiermacher, for example, thought that the union could, after all, be only external, that is to say, that it would relate only to the temporal administration of the churches, while the members would retain their individual faith, for which they had to account only to God. Steudel and Tittmann, two decided naturalists, opposed this mode of proceeding, and desired only, they said, an union of hearts; but they confounded two things essentially distinct, unity of faith and unity of the principles which lead to the acquisition of faith. The first is quite consistent with the idea of a church, entire and holy, and should never be separated from it. But in the actual state of the church, this unity of faith has become impossible. We must, therefore, employ every means of attaining it insensibly, and the removal of the barriers which formed an external separation between the Lutherans and the Reformed party may hasten the time when unity of faith shall harmonise with the church in whose bosom it shall be found. May that happy time arrive even sooner than

\* The best work on this subject, in French, is that of M. Tabaraud, *Histoire critique des projets formés depuis trois cents ans pour réunir les Communions Chrétiennes*. Paris, 1824. It is written in a *Catholico-galliean* point of view.

we venture to hope ! may not only the children of Reform, but also those of the two other great Christian communities unite together to worship the same God in the name of the same Redeemer ! The prosperity of the people depends on this event more than may at first be imagined. Who does not know the power of unity in religious belief and enlightened zeal to purify the sentiments, ennoble the mind, and to form great characters. If harmony is desirable in the thoughts of an individual, should we not labour to produce it in a society of minds ?

But the doctrine of the consubstantiality and the ubiquity of the Lord's Supper, which was in fact given up in the union, had not been entirely nullified by Rationalism. It was still retained in some localities ; and it was principally on account of this doctrine that the Lutherans of Bremen refused to communicate with the members of the Reformed church, and thus the union could not be effected in that free town. At Breslau Dr. Scheibel placed himself at the head of a somewhat considerable party of Lutherans, and energetically opposed an union which he declared to be too exclusively the work of religious indifference. But the differences have by degrees vanished, and "The Evangelical Church" waits only for the appearance of some superior men who will know how to prepare all for the success of a greater union, which is demanded by all the friends of religion and order.\*

In regard to protestations, I ought to have mentioned that a well-known voice was heard to blame the measures advocated by the Prussian Government ; it was that of von Ammon, who took a part in all the important questions of his time, without espousing any party. In the affair of the Theses of Harms, Schleiermacher had reproached him

\* Rudelbach and Guerike, one a superintendent of a church, the other a professor at Halle, two writers whose historical learning is well known to everybody, have made strenuous efforts, in their special works on the subject, and in their *Review of Lutheran Theology*, to call for a revision of the work, and to make the Lutheran doctrine prevail in the Evangelical churches over the Calvinistic, which, according to them, had the supremacy. There is both truth and falsehood in these assertions. They are true in so far as the Lutheran doctrine respecting the Lord's Supper has been universally abandoned ; but they are false when they maintain that the rigid doctrines of Calvin and of the synod of Dordrecht, respecting predestination and justification, are supreme in the Reformed churches, when, in fact, in all Protestant countries, very few partisans of these opinions are to be found. The learned, but somewhat conceited, Guerike, ought to have known this, when he undertook to compose his *Allgemeine christliche Symbolik*, Leipzig, 1838, and he then, perhaps, would not have said these words, unworthy of so learned a man : "The Union is the root of all evil, it is the work of the Devil."

somewhat sharply with the malleability of his opinions, and even with desiring to transplant Jesuitism into the Protestant churches. He was now asked whether he opposed the union in virtue of unity of faith, or only because he did not approve of the grounds on which it was about to be effected. Von Ammon answered that an union in which all parties were not influenced by a Christian principle, could end only in a political confusion, from which it would be impossible to extricate ourselves, and that he feared that the indifference which was the motive of many in this affair would produce new sects, and would strengthen the cause of pietism. As to the fusion of all the differences into one and the same form of opinion, he had too much philosophy, he understood too well the rights of truth, not to desire the accomplishment of a result which he had sought to promote in his own way by his work on Christianity, which tends to prove that that religion ought to become universal and to be represented in the world by a monarchy whose tendencies would never oppose liberty. Von Ammon maintained that for the accomplishment of this good work, much charity and patience are necessary, and that they will be far more effectual than all the efforts of the civil power. Though not among the number of the indifferent, we might tell this writer that his exhortations are excellent when they relate to the moral life of individuals, since, in such cases, much improvement may be effected by means of mildness, patience, and charity; but for certain social evils strong measures are necessary to make the patients at least understand their condition.

## CHAPTER XI.

CRITICAL LABOURS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—EICHHORN, HERDER, GABLER, L. BAUER—THEIR FOLLOWERS, BUCHHOLTZ, JÄNISCH, LÜDERS, CLAUDIUS—TENDENCY OF EWALD, HITZIG, BERTHEAU—VATKE, OF THE SCHOOL OF HEGEL—SUPERNATURALIST SCHOOL, HENGSTENBERG, HEINRICH RANKE, HÄVERNICK, M. BAUMGARTEN.

BEFORE we relate the history of new philosophical attempts to remodel doctrine, we must go back a little, and show how the domain of exegesis in which Michaëlis laboured with so much success, but with a tendency which opened every avenue to Rationalism, was soon usurped by an unbridled exegetical system; and thus Protestantism was deprived of its basis, as it had been stripped by historical researches of its Christian doctrines.

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn was the first who followed ardently in the footsteps of Michaëlis. He made use of his profound knowledge of languages to degrade the Bible to the rank of the other oriental sacred books, according to it only a certain literary superiority. He published the fruits of his researches in several journals which he had founded, and which are still precious treasures for the learned;\* but his hypotheses respecting the Old and New Testaments, as they are found in his *Primitive History*, and in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, rendered his name still more celebrated in the domain of Rationalism.†

In his examination of the fragments of Wolfenbüttel, Eichhorn had already made the boldest concessions to Naturalism, in granting that all which is said in the Old Testament respecting the immediate intervention of the Deity must not be understood literally, and in taking great pains to exculpate the authors of the books which compose it from all participation in an imposture. It was generally believed

\* *Allgemeine Bibliothek der biblischen Literatur*, 10 vols. This learned journal was preceded by his *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Literatur*. 18 volumes had appeared of it.

† His *Einleitung* is in 7 volumes, and his *Urgeschichte* in 2. The latter is published by Gabler.

among the people of that time, said he, that God often interposed his authority in the midst of the events of life, in a visible manner, or by means of his messengers. Is it to be wondered at that men superior in mind and wisdom to all their contemporaries, took advantage of their position, and of the received belief, to make themselves useful to humanity, which claimed their care, their devotion and their intelligence? It is true, adds Eichhorn, that the writer often appears, as for instance in the Book of Judges, not to have seen himself the facts which he relates, *since he exaggerates their proportions*, but this should be ascribed rather to the enthusiasm by which he was inspired than to a wish to misrepresent. When we look more closely into the matter, we do not see any great difference between this manner of judging of the sacred writers, and that of Reimarus, who, with more politeness, says only that they profited by their enthusiasm and the influence of their genius. In this way, however, he explains most of the miraculous accounts which accompany the history of Noah, of Abraham, and of Moses. We perceive, nevertheless, that Eichhorn is not at his ease with an exegesis of this nature, and we see him recoil from the task of fully developing these ideas. He preferred to leave that care to Gabler and Paulus, who consecrated to it all their labours.

On the verge of the ground thus broken up by Eichhorn were some high-minded men whom the spirit of liberty, excited in them by Semler, induced to attend to the criticism of the Old Testament, but from whom the imposing work of Michaëlis on the Mosaic law extorted admiration. The philosopher of Königsberg first attempted to apply his system of moral interpretation to the history of the primitive times related in the book of Genesis. He was followed by Herder, who is a passionate admirer of the poetical element in these accounts, but who makes a strange mixture of the sacred and the profane, which he afterwards turns, in a graceful style, into a monument worthy the great historian of the Hebrews. Herder saw in the Jewish nation only one link in the long chain of humanity, and the love-songs of the Arab and the Indian excite in his mind as much emotion as the Song of Solomon, to which, with his habitual sagacity, he compares them. But the morality and the poetry thus deduced from the Old Testament did not satisfy Rationalism. It was necessary to show that not only might Moses and Abraham be treated like Homer and Ulysses, but that to preserve the honour of the books, and to save them from evil suspicions, we must prove that the apparent absurdity presented by the facts mentioned in them, is owing to their being more or less ingenious myths, from which we must take away the veil if we wish to arrive at the ideas which they conceal. Hence arose that series of mythical suppositions



with regard to all ancient nations ; and Gabler, Lorentz Bauer, and De Wette, afterwards applied them to the Bible.

It is, however, a glory—or shall I say a fatality?—attached to the name of Semler, that we must always go back to him to discover the origin of any novelty in religion. His wandering imagination touched on so many things, that the question of myths, generally thought to have been agitated for the first time by Eichhorn, has for its author Semler, in so far, at least, as it concerns the Old Testament. In fact, in his *Freie Untersuchung über den Kanon*, he does not hesitate to call the histories of Esther and Samson myths ; and we must observe, that from the pen of Semler this word is equivalent to fable.\* However, in his *Erklärung über Theologische Censuren*, he uses these words :—“ I distinguish in interpretation purely historical notions, which cannot and ought not to become general, and which, in consequence, do not form a part of Christian doctrine (*nicht in den Lehrbegriff der Christen gehören*), even when they are found in the Jewish teaching ; this leads me to conclude that there exists a sort of *Jewish mythology*.” Perhaps the allegorical manner in which some ancient doctors interpreted the Old Testament caused Semler to think that between this method and that of explaining the fables of Homer or of Ovid there was no difference save in words. As he had no convenient opportunity of developing this doctrine, the germ of mythical interpretation lay hid in his writings, waiting only for a propitious moment to unfold itself. Eichhorn extended the domain of myths over the first chapters of the book of Genesis, and continued his attempts until, with Paulus, he saw the possibility of explaining in a natural manner all that is marvellous in the Bible. But whether because his great sagacity showed him the inutility of such attempts, or whether from some other motive, he confined himself to a little excursion on the Fall of Adam and on the two first chapters of Matthew. Gabler and Schelling, in their turn, enlarged the circle, as far as relates to the Old Testament, until L. Bauer, more daring than they, published his *Hebräische Mythologie*. He there defined the myth as an historical legend (*historische Sagen*) respecting the most ancient facts of the history of the earth and its inhabitants, principally those which concern either a tribe or a nation ; or, again, as reasonings resembling something historical on cosmogony and geogony, on the physical causes of things, on material objects, and worked up into a marvellous form, and insensibly ornamented in different ways.† Hence we see that his system was applicable only to the Old Testa-

\* So thinks Tholuck also. *Verm. Schriften*, 2, 57.

† *Hebräische Mythologie*, Part I. p. 3.

ment; the writers, also, who received his hypothesis with favour confined themselves, contrary to the course pursued by the empirical and philosophical rationalists, to finding the myth in the Books of the Old Covenant. The attempts of Paulus to explain naturally what the others tried to explain mythically having prevailed in argument, there ensued an interval of repose, during which De Wette tried in vain all the resources of his brilliant erudition to draw the myth from its obscurity. Even in the camp of Rationalism was still maintained a sort of authenticity of the sacred books, and this prevented the myth, which always supposes a compilation posterior to the events, from being well received by theologians. Gabler, nevertheless, in his journal, continued to advocate the mythical explanation, and to boast its superiority over the natural method, which left to the facts only a small and almost imperceptible nucleus of history, that spoke neither to the mind nor the heart, while the myth always contained some thought which might be profitable. The exegetical labours and historical researches, however, were continued with ardour, and the Old Testament was especially their object. It was perfectly well understood that, if criticism succeeded in overthrowing it entirely, an essential base would thus be removed from the Christian edifice, and for this aim, though unacknowledged even to themselves, the learned laboured with indefatigable activity. In the list of works of this nature we must place the writings of Professor von Bohlen, of Königsberg, which excited the attention of the learned, from the vast knowledge displayed in them. He had studied the oriental languages, at Bonn under Wilhelm von Schlegel, and at Berlin under the celebrated Bopp, to whom the Sanscrit particularly was so familiar, and he was equally well versed in the kindred studies. He made himself acquainted with the researches already conducted, before undertaking himself to bear the torch of criticism into the questions relative either to the origin of the Israelites and of their more ancient literature, or those which concern the cradle of the human race,—questions still so obscure. He shows profound wisdom, especially in his work on India,\* where he disproves the theories which aim at showing that from Egypt India received its civilisation, when the reverse was actually the case. It is not my purpose here to exhibit the importance of this work, which

\* *Das alte Indien (India considered in its Relations to Egypt)*, 2 vols. Königsberg.

[Compare *Die Genesis*, erläutert von P. von Bohlen, 1835; and Bohlen's *Autobiographie*. Königsberg, 1845; also *Kommentur über die Genesis*, von Tuch. Halle, 1838; the first vol. of Ewald's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1843-1848). See especially an *Essay*, by Ewald, in the first part of his new *Jahrbücher der biblischen Wissenschaft*. Göttingen, 1848.—E.]

placed von Bohlen high in the domain of critico-historical science, but I ought, from a spirit of impartiality, to speak in favourable terms of his learning before pointing out the anti-Christian tendency of his labours. We perceive this tendency in the scrupulous care which he takes throughout the work to disengage the religious ideas of India from their gross covering, and afterwards to institute between them and the Hebrew literature comparisons rarely advantageous to the latter. But we feel still more certain of it when we find the echoes of Rationalism using his works as a support to them in lowering the importance of the Old Testament. It has even been said of his work, that it is eminently fitted to combat the prejudice which regards the Hebrew people as being the only ancient nation that was favoured with a revelation.\* In his work upon Genesis, especially, he attacks, with imperturbable *sang froid*, and a contempt which science cannot excuse, all the data of Christian tradition, to secure to the books of Moses, with respect to the moral and religious ideas which they contain, a superiority over the sacred books of other nations, which few will feel inclined to dispute. There are some happy efforts to show the essential links which unite the traditions of Genesis with the national sentiments of the people of Israel, and to prove, in consequence, that notwithstanding the unauthenticity of that book and the others of the Pentateuch, it must be acknowledged that the compilation was founded on generally-received national ideas. The author employs his best efforts to prove that all the supernatural facts contained in the Pentateuch are products of the imagination on the part of unknown authors, who gave to the work the form it now has; and, moreover, that the Pentateuch, and particularly Genesis, borrowed from other nations its primitive history, and, what is more, disfigured that history. It is impossible to be more unjust than this towards the legislator of the Jewish people, and, at the same time, it is impossible to show more clearly how systematic prejudices sometimes overcome ordinary sagacity. For, is much learning necessary to teach us that there are between the contents of Genesis, and of the sacred books of India and Persia, radical differences? These are plain, for example, in the creation out of nothing, and the pure and simple idea of one only God, the purpose of the deluge, and many other facts which might be multiplied, and which prove a great dissimilarity between the essence of the original history of the Hebrews and the analogous accounts which we meet with among other oriental nations. If von Bohlen had not been prejudiced against the Hebrew literature, and infatuated with Rationalism, he would have been content, at least,

\* See Röhr's *Krit. Prediger-Bibliothek*.

to regard these differences as special developments of primitive elements in the limits of a proper nationality, and he would have confined himself within the bounds of probability, without being obliged to adopt the theory directly opposed to his own, viz., that all other nations had received their ancient history from the Jews.

To this class we must also refer the work of Bleek,\* although he disputes many of the assertions of the professor of Königsberg; for he, too, believes Genesis to be a composition in which myths, if they do not occupy the principal place, are at least not subordinate to history. To it belong also the writings of Professor Vatke, of Berlin, which are to the Old Testament what Strauss's *Leben Jesu* is to the New; and De Wette's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. All these seek to propagate, while heaping up rubbish on the field of history, the idea that religion is not attached to facts, and that the indestructible sentiment planted in the hearts of mortals will survive all the perishable elements to which what rationalists term an ignorant orthodoxy would subject them. The hypotheses accumulated one on the other to cast discredit on the old opinions respecting the formation and age of the books of the Old Covenant, the efforts to make their accounts undergo the same operations as Voss had performed on the *Iliad* of Homer, and Niebuhr on the *Roman History*, that is to say, to find in it only myths, now poetical, now philosophical, now historical, and sometimes of a mixed nature; all these efforts, I say, have failed to produce anything of stability in the domain of criticism, and each rationalistic theologian still pursues his way according to his own fancies. Supernaturalism, meanwhile, by a criticism more sober and less hazardous, has laboured in its turn to throw light on the origin of the Pentateuch, and to solve the difficulties accumulated by criticism. Through the medium of two other professors of Berlin and of Rostock, it has done justice to these strange romances respecting the history of a people whose literature is the only one entirely free from romance.†

We might follow the encroachments of the myth which, from the Old Testament, have been extended by Kaiser, Gabler, Bauer, von Ammon, Berthold, and Sieffert, to different facts of the evangelical history, such as the resurrection, the ascension, and some other narratives not less marvellous, until all the scenes containing that element would come into the number of detected myths. Sieffert goes so far as to consider as myths, in the Gospel of Matthew alone, the genealogy of Jesus, the history of his childhood, the calling of the sons of Zebedee, many parts

\* *De libri Geneseos origine atque indole historica.* Bonn, 1836.

† Hengstenberg and Hävernick.



of the sermon on the mount, the calling of Matthew, and, on account of the accessory circumstances, the story of the cure of the woman who had an issue of blood, that of Jairus' daughter, many parts of the tenth chapter, which contain our Lord's instructions to his apostles, the parables of the sower, of the tares and of the grain of mustard-seed, the ill-treatment of Jesus at Nazareth, the multiplication of the loaves, the cure of the blind man at Jericho, and the scene at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. As for the account of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his conduct towards the money-changers in the temple, and the malediction of the fig-tree, our author recognises in them a slight trace of apostolical tradition, coloured by the Greek authors of the actual Gospels. The account of the Last Supper bears indestructible marks of simple and natural truth, and yet he is of opinion that it has been much embellished by the Greek compiler.\* We thus see that Sieffert has subjected the whole Gospel to his mythical investigation, for his criticism lasts from the genealogy to the passion. Was there anything left to Dr. Strauss, unattacked by the murderous tooth of exegesis? Yet, adds Sieffert, this Gospel of Matthew, though composed of mythical stories, bears evident marks of its dependence on tradition, such as an accumulation of things in the discourses and the facts, without the least chronological order, the assimilation of different facts, &c.† These different considerations appear to have led to the same conclusion, in a work, specially on the subject,‡ Schneckenburger, otherwise so Christian a writer, and Kern, in an article in a journal,§ published, so to say, under the eye of Strauss, at the time when that writer was giving to his bookseller the fruit of his own meditations. We thus see that no precedents were wanting to inspire Dr. Strauss, whose system astonished the rationalists, who did not expect such audacity, much more than it did the supernaturalists, who had long believed in the power of logic. Strauss, in fact, did nothing more than deduce the consequences of the premises laid down during the last three quarters of a century. "The author for the first time brought together the most contradictory doctrines, the schools of Bolingbroke, of Voltaire, of Lessing, of Kant, of Count J. de Maistre, under whatever names they were transformed and disguised; materialism, mysticism, lovers of symbols, of natural, figurative or dogmatical explanations, of vision, of animal magnetism, of allegories, of mythologies;

\* Sieffert, *Ueber den Ursprung des ersten canon. Evangel.* Königsberg, 1832.

† Ibid. p. 60, 68, 73, 74, 111, 147.

‡ *Kritisch. Versuch über den Ursprung des ersten can. Evang.* Stuttgart, 1834.

§ In the *Tübingen Zeitschriften*, 1834. Part II. 3-132.



and interpreting them, confusing them, comparing them, by means of indefatigable dialectics, he succeeded in deducing from all the same conclusion. In a word, he concentrated all doubts into one, and collected into one quiver the fugitive arrows of scepticism. In addition to this, he tore away the metaphysical veil which had covered these doctrines, and thus reduced the question to the most simple terms; it was seen openly and for the first time what a work of destruction had been accomplished. He raised, like Antony, the robe of Cæsar, and each could recognise on that great corpse the blows which he had struck in the dark.”\* But having shown the natural interpretation which prevailed, in consequence of the efforts of Paulus and Eichhorn, who distrusted the myths, I ought briefly to relate the aim and results of the efforts of the former, who is himself their best representative. Paulus was born at Leomberg, near Stuttgart, in 1761. He early conceived the plan of reconciling, in his way, the Christian religion with the general sciences which he delighted to cultivate, and with this view he applied his mind to the study of the monuments on which that religion is founded. He supposed that Jesus thought only of establishing Theism on the ruins of Polytheism, and that to this noble end he devoted the high moral qualities which Providence had granted him. But as he was far superior to the men of his day, and especially to the companions of his labours, the impression which he made upon them easily produced enthusiasm, and from enthusiasm to adoration the distance is not great. When

\* Edgard Quinet, *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1839. One of the most powerful and successful arguments against Strauss, is the intimate connexion between the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which prove so well the truth of the evangelical narratives; this connexion is very striking to any one who admits the authenticity of the Acts, and it has been well demonstrated by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. But a year after the appearance of Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, a theological professor in the same University of Tübingen, a great lover of myths, who sees in Christianity only a phase of gnosticism, which prevailed over pure Judaism (*Die christliche Gnosis*. Tübingen, 1835), asked himself whether criticism could do nothing respecting the Acts of the Apostles, which, during an uninterrupted point of eighteen centuries, had been revered as canonical by the whole church. With a bold hand, he endeavoured to strip this book of an essential fact, viz., that concerning Paul's voyage to Rome—[see a truly scholar-like, and, in the writer's estimation, unanswerable, work on this subject, in *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, by James Smith, Esq., of Jordanhill. London: Longman, 1848.—E.]—which he considers legendary. (See *Tübingen Zeitschriften*, 1836. 111.) “Meanwhile,” said he, “let me return to this book and all Paul's epistles, which sooner or later, I, or some others, will also submit to a critical examination.” But a worthy answer, which somewhat abates the pretensions of Professor Bauer, has been made to him by Böttger, who, as yet, has published only the first part of his work (*Bauer's Histor. Kritik in ihrer Consequenz*, erste Abtheilung. Braunschweig, 1810).

some of them wished to transmit to posterity an account of what had so much struck them in their intercourse with the Saviour, their words expressed their admiration, and as they thought that the New Covenant ought not to be in any way inferior to the Old, they attempted to give to the events of our Lord's life the same marvellous character which had made the glory of Moses and the prophets. Proceeding on such data, Dr. and Professor Paulus, more familiar than ever with the Divine word, asked whether, by translating differently from others, or by separating from historical fact, the circumstances which surround it, and are merely accessory, though full of what is marvellous, we could not succeed in extracting from the evangelical narratives an account which should preserve its historical foundation, and might defy the criticism of every adversary to the faith of Jesus as the holy founder of the purest Theism. The result of the labours of Paulus on this subject was the publication of his commentary on the New Testament,\* which, during twenty years, gave so fatal a direction to German theology. It is true that, in this work, Paulus shows much originality, much knowledge in the various branches of human learning, and a certain gravity which we would willingly believe serious; but we see that the ingenious writer opened the New Testament to discover its meaning in the same way as he would have opened Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to explain them to his pupils. Seeing in the Gospels only oriental metamorphoses, he devoted all his efforts to strip them of their supernatural character; his greatest ambition was to deduce from them a *Life of Jesus* similar to those of the great men of antiquity whom we admire for their fine characters, without, however, admitting anything in their achievements which surpasses the power of the intellect or of the human will. It has been well said by a sensible and highly intelligent woman,—“It is a bad direction of the spirit of inquiry, to wish to apply it to truths which can only be perceived by means of contemplation and mental elevation. The spirit of inquiry ought to recognise what is superior to reason, as an astronomer marks heights which man's sight cannot reach; thus we should employ the spirit of inquiry to point out incomprehensible regions, without attempting either to deny or to submit them to language.”† We have shown the path which the commentator pursued: it would be superfluous to give examples of the way in which he executed his plan. The philosopher would only shrug his shoulders at the

\* [See Paulus' *Philolog. Krit. Commentar. über d. N. T.* Lübeck, 1805; and *Exeget. Handbuch über die drei ersten Evangelien.* Heidelberg, 1831. *Die drei Lehrbriefe des Johannes übersetzt.* Heidelberg, 1839. *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristenthums.* Heidelberg, 1828.—E.]

† Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne.*

mention of such extravagances, and the Christian would be shocked to hear of such indecencies.\*

Is it surprising that, after so arbitrary an interpretation of a book which had hitherto been venerated on account of the real and positive facts of which it contained the narrative, other writers rushed on the Bible like birds of prey, and defiled it in emulation of each other? When they saw that Eichhorn, for example, maintained that the prophets never intended to announce future contingent events, but that they only expressed themselves in a poetic manner;† when they saw that Paulus employed several pages of his commentary in denying that our Lord, though he admits the authenticity of his words, ever spoke of his future resurrection;‡ when they heard Bauer, with an assurance which should proceed only from infallibility, declare that all commentators were deceived when they thought that they found in the Old Testament ideas bearing a relation to those of the new;§ when they had ascertained (so were they deluded by science) that the works of Rosenmüller, of Vater, and of Gesenius, tended only to support these audacious suppositions,—then the mania for insulting the Bible was carried to its height, and the rationalists might judge of the excesses to which, by a slippery descent, their principles necessarily lead. Then Scherer, rather than deny the existence of the prophecies too evidently contained in the Bible, preferred to condemn all the prophets as impostors, adding that the true faith would have been better established on the earth without them.|| Professor Buchholtz confined his attacks more especially to Moses, and reproached him with having governed the people by terrorism.¶ Jänisch, a preacher of Berlin, speaking of the God of the Old Testament, whom Christ calls his Father, considers him to be a kind of household divinity to whom the family of Abraham had vowed a special worship, and who was afterwards elevated, doubtless, on account of the services which He had been pleased to render to the children of Israel, to the dignity of monarch of heaven and earth.\*\* Professor Luders, of Göttingen, said of the God of Israel, that he pos-

\* Those who know Strauss' *Life of Jesus* will find there numerous specimens of the natural exegesis of Paulus.

† *Die hebräischen Propheten*. 3 vols. Göttingen, 1816-1819.

‡ Second volume of his *Commentary*, p. 564.

§ In his edition of the *Philologia Sacra*, of Glassius, vol. ii. p. 401.

|| *Erklärung der sämtlichen Weissagungen des A. und N. T.* Altenburg, 1801. The library of Nicolai accorded to its author the reward of immortality for having powerfully aided in dissipating ignorance and folly.

¶ *Moscs und Jesus*. Berlin, 1803.

\*\* *Betrachtungen über die Entwicklung des menschlichen Geschlechts*.

sessed neither the hearts of men of feeling nor the minds of those who knew how to think, but that all these withdrew from him.\* A superintendent of Hildesheim thought to exalt the glory of Jesus by proving that the tricks which he allowed himself to play among his countrymen were designed only to ensure the reception of a better religion.† The author of a serious work published at Helmstädt asserted, the better to defend the contents of the New Testament, that Christianity must have its mythology as well as other religions, and that the sacred writers could not do otherwise than insert their legends if they wished a superstitious people to receive the maxims of their morality.‡ It would be easy to add to this description of the aberrations of the human mind, other follies which have been printed in our own times; but the picture would not be more graphic from being over crowded. Yet I cannot refrain from mentioning a discourse delivered seriously and with all the gravity of a titular professor, before the learned members of the Historico-Theological Society of Leipzig, on the occasion of its jubilee of twenty-five years. Professor Hermann there treated this subject (*risum teneatis?*), viz., that Eve was created before Adam, and that, consequently, “Moses and Hesiod had committed the same error in their account of the creation of the human race.”§ If we had not found this discourse in the usually serious journal edited by Dr. Illgen, we should have taken it for a joke played upon the learned physiologist Oken, to show him the result of some of his theories; but the journal which contained it, the circumstances under which it was delivered, notwithstanding the singular details which enter into the development of the theory, all concur to show that it is one more of those mental aberrations which must ensue when the spirit which inspired the Bible does not aid us to understand it. It is not to be wondered at, that Professor Hengstenberg became very angry, and sharply reproved Hermann for his theology of apes. We will finish these details by mentioning the contemporaneous audacity of one Adolph Brennglas, who accuses Moses of avarice, because he refused to melt down the golden calf, and treats him as a true buffoon when he makes him sit down at the table of Jehovah, who cheerfully gave him hospitality on Mount Sinai. This author speaks of Lot as one “who, like a true Israelite, did not wait to be told twice”

\* *Geschichte der vorzüglichsten Völker der alten Welt.* Brunswick, 1800.

† *Betrachtungen über das Urchristenthum.* 1808.

‡ *Vindicie sacrarum N. T. scripturarum.* Helmstädt, 1824.

§ [Compare Illgen's *Zeitschrift für Histor. Theol.* 1840. 1 Heft, p. 61, seq. The learned writer finds the first parent of our race in an ape, and gravely contends that his view is more probable than that contained in the Bible, as well as highly conducive to moral efforts.—E.]



when he was warned to quit Sodom. These instances will surely suffice to show to what excesses those may come who have lost the clue which should guide a reasonable man to the understanding of the biblical narrative.\* Rationalists have wished to disavow these excesses; but they have no right to condemn them, since they themselves have confused the external proofs of the authenticity and divinity of the Old Testament, and have indulged in interpretations which, though under a more serious form, are not less really destructive.

We must, however, add that the serious works of Eichhorn, Herder, and De Wette, and particularly the spirit of æsthetic piety by which they were pervaded, exercised in some degree a beneficial influence on philological science, and did something for the better appreciation of the literal sense of the different biblical books. Willingly would we say something further in praise of De Wette's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*; but this work is of a more arbitrary character than the *Einleitung in das N. T.*, of which we shall afterwards speak. He decides from a single relative improbability on the reality or falsity of a fact related as historical; nor can we, in reading the book, refrain from saying, with the latest commentator, that, notwithstanding the great learning which enriches it, it is without life, and entirely wanting in the spirit which pervades the Old Testament. We cannot understand, adds this commentator, how an author generally so spiritual could write it.† Eichhorn and De Wette, however, aroused some eminent men. Among these was Gesenius, who united the rare gift of teaching, to a knowledge of the Oriental languages, seldom acquired, and who was unequalled in the purely grammatical and lexicographical parts of the Old Testament. In this class stands Umbreit also, who was born at Sonneborn in Saxe-Gotha in 1795, and who raised himself to a high rank between empirical and speculative Rationalism by works which remind us of those of Herder, and are slightly tinged with the colours of Schleiermacher.‡ To these we may add Ewald, Hitzig, and Bertheau, who, though of most decidedly rationalistic tendencies, yet rendered eminent services to the cause of Christian truth, by compelling the pure supernaturalists to

\* The work of Brennglas is entitled, *Neue Berliner Guckkastenbilder*. Mannheim, 1841.

† M. Baumgarten, *Theologischer Commentar. zum Alten Testament*, vol. i. lxiv.

‡ *Uebersetz. und Ausleg. des Buches Job*. Heidelberg, 2nd edit. 1832. *Philolog. krit. und philos. Commentar. über die Sprüche Salomos, &c.* Heidelberg, 1826. *Christliche Erbauung aus dem Psalter*. Hamburg, 1835. Umbreit is known to be the co-editor of that eclectic review of theology (*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*) which has lately done so much for theological science.



follow them into the field of science, and beat out with them the wheat still left in the husks.

Ewald, also, sees in the prophetic spirit of the Old Testament only the religious enthusiasm of its writers, but he is an upright writer, and zealous for justice and truth.\* This zeal leads him to point out very happily, in the biblical books which he translates and annotates, the earnest morality which he finds in all parts of them. "Nowhere," says he, "among no people, has the sublime thought of the divine appeared so durable as with the people of Israel, and there is nothing equal to the poetry of this people for assisting us to understand the superior religion, of which it breathes the truth." "The prophecies of this people," adds he, "so far as they are purified and have taken a better form, have acquired a higher importance, and even a worth, which will never perish." But Ewald explains the worth of prophecy in a manner which the most accommodating orthodoxy could not adopt. "The Spirit," says he, and by this word he understands the pure, divine life, "the Spirit which was first in God alone, was placed in the germ in man, and at each movement or strong impulse, the germ became excited, and the divine spirit, formerly in repose, showed itself openly. In proportion as religion is better understood by history, this prophetic spirit will become stronger, and the appeals made by God to man will be the more irresistible." †

This is the natural mode of explaining the gift of prophecy, as laid down by Spinoza, in his *Tractatus Politico-theologicus*, and the learned Ewald does not therefore assume a supernatural faculty, when, struck by the endless ravages made by criticism and its results in the province of religious truth, he utters, from time to time, regrets expressive of poignant grief, and prophetic words, which are anything but favourable to the future, not only of Rationalism, but also of German Protestantism

\* We must not forget that he was one of the seven professors who were compelled to leave the University of Göttingen, in consequence of their protestation in favour of the constitutional law revoked by the reigning king. Georg Heinrich August. Ewald was born at Göttingen in 1803. Since 1838 he has been professor of oriental languages in Tübingen. When still a student at the University, he made himself known, by a work full of talent on the composition of Genesis (Brunswick, 1823), which plainly showed what were his favourite studies. He has since published *A Critical Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, 3rd edit. Leipzig, 1838; another *Critical Grammar of the Arabic*. 2 vols. But his principal works, and those which he wrote most from inclination, are, *Die poetischen Bücher des alten Bundes*. Göttingen, 1835-37; and *Ueber die Propheten*. Stuttgart. 2 vols.

† *Die poetischen Bücher des alten Bundes*, Part I. p. 7, 8. *Ueber die Propheten*, p. 2, 3.

itself.\* It is true that Ewald has removed from the study of the oriental languages, and consequently from the field of criticism, many errors, and has understood the religious morality of the men of the ancient law better than many of his contemporaries, than De Wette, for example, who considers as spiritless and insipid most of the Psalms and the productions of Zacharias and Malachi, while he finds, on the contrary, all the conditions of an epic poem in the Pentateuch, unpoetical as it is in many places. Still Ewald, from his way of considering the mission of the prophets, and from the relation in which he places the God of Israel to the gods of Paganism, can be regarded only as a wise and pious rationalist, who has placed his foot on the threshold of the temple of Christian truth, and would advance into the sanctuary, if the spirit whose powerful influence he admits, shed upon his conscience the light which as yet illumines only a part of his mind. Modesty, generally the companion of true learning, prompts him to say, that he is far from imagining that he has exhausted the subject, but hopes that his labours will give encouragement to other friends of biblical studies.†

To the school of Ewald belong Bertheau and Hitzig; the former, rather a philologist than a grammarian, has, by his great archæological knowledge, thrown most valuable light on the history of the Old Testament.‡ Hitzig is as great a philologist as his master, but appears to be inferior to him in earnestness, and in the moral tendency of his writings;§ still, like Ewald, in his translations and annotations of the books of the Old Testament, he omits nothing which may improve the text, or assist in discovering the grammatical meaning; and in this respect, all must acknowledge the indirect services which Hitzig may render to religion. Shall we be able to say the same of that pupil of Gesenius and Hegel, who employs the philosophy of the one, and the grammatico-rationalistic tendency of the other, to depreciate all the religious ideas of the patriarchs and the prophets, and to prove worthless the books which contain them? We know how little Hegel himself thinks of the Old Testament; he devotes only a few pages to it in the whole of his works. This, however, is not to be wondered at in one so little impressed by true Christian doctrine; for Hegelianism having borrowed from the Christian system only names and empty forms, it

\* See, especially, his Preface, p. xiii. of the second volume of the *Prophets*.

† Second volume of the *Prophets*, p. 10.

‡ Besides the *Poesien des Ephrem*, which he edited, (Göttingen, 1837,) he published, in 1840, *Die sieben Gruppen Mosäisch. Gesetze, &c. Ein Beitrag zur Kritik des Pentateuch*.

§ F. Hitzig, *Kurzgefasstes exeget. Handbuch z. Alt. Test.* He has as yet published only Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, and the Psalms.

was impossible that its founder should understand the connexion between the two Testaments, or admire their imposing harmony. We cannot wonder that his disciple, Vatke, who was influenced at Halle by Gesenius and Wegscheider, and was not attracted to the study of the Hebrew books by Schleiermacher, who is weak on this point only, should, when he became an adept of Hegelianism, and felt inclined to handle a subject neglected by his master, treat it in a manner most unfavourable to the cause of orthodoxy.

Vatke first published his opinions in a work on the religion of the Old Testament, as developed in its canonical books, a work which was to be the prelude to his biblical theology, scientifically explained.\* If he had shown how the development of religious ideas ought to take place, supposing that this development should not contradict his pre-suppositions, but that harmony must be displayed in all its reality, he ought also to have regulated his subject, and have wielded the sword of criticism against the many details which would oppose his synthesis. But we find that this partisan of Hegel takes his master's philosophy for granted, and by it judges of the progress of the events related in the Bible; and thus the national history of the Hebrew people is compelled to submit to a fate similar to that of the unfortunate beings who were stretched on the bed of Procrustes.

Taking this point of view, we can not only see what was the path pursued by the writer, but we can also see that he could follow no other, and we can foretell the consequences. He was certain to depreciate the Hebrews and their religion, and to eulogize Paganism, since the development of the divine consciousness could be shown only by these means; and if facts came into collision with the Hegelian aphorisms they were declared unfounded, and a modern origin was, *à priori*, attributed to them. When we see Vatke enchanted with certain commandments of the Decalogue, and especially with the precept of love towards God and men, which tempers the austerity of the laws of Moses, we should expect to find him on the search for proofs to establish the authenticity of these and other passages. This would be the course of a writer desirous, above all things, of finding truth; but a philosopher is not guided by this wise rule. As it is his business to find in history only approving evidences of his system, the task of historian, when he undertakes it, is to re-construct history, and not to listen to its teachings. Vatke then declares apocryphal all the passages of the Pentateuch, and of the books anterior to the Prophets, which are cha-

\* *Die biblische Theologie, wissenschaftlich dargestellt.* Th. 1. Die Relig. d. A. T. Berlin, 1835.

acterised by exalted piety and morality, and which, as the tenth commandment and the precept of charity expressed in Deuteronomy, are the expressions of a purer moral feeling. He maintains that these words could not have been written at a period when the Hebrew people hardly knew whether to worship Jehovah or the gods of foreign nations, at a period when Saturn seemed to enjoy the same rights as the God of Israel, and when Monotheism was so far from being firmly established that no one would dare to name David as the author of one of the Psalms now generally attributed to him.\* There is, says he, an immense interval between idolatry and the prohibition to make carved images; must we not, therefore, conclude that that prohibition was conceived and uttered at a less remote period? By pursuing this *à priori* method, Vatke arrives at the conclusion that if what is related of the life of Moses were not generally mythical, that account would make him superior, in our eyes, to Jesus, whose life is not so full of the marvellous.† We have said that Vatke did for the Old Testament what Strauss did for the New. Both of them, in modifying the facts, or altogether removing them, still wished to preserve the ideas which they veiled. But the field of Vatke was the wider of the two, and gave room for the development of philosophical considerations respecting the progress of the human race, which could not be comprehended in the narrow limits in which Strauss works the machinery that is to produce his evangelical myths.

But the time of reaction was at hand, and Hengstenberg, professor at Berlin, was the man to introduce critico-historical researches into the camp of Supernaturalism.

Hengstenberg has long been a mark for the rationalists, and he has well deserved to be so on account of the lively attacks which he has directed against all their manifestations. We cannot say that we agree with all his dogmatical views, but we cannot deny his great zeal for what he believes to be the truth, and his profound theological knowledge. This man, by the activity which he shows in the cause of Supernaturalism, and by the publication of learned works on the Old Testament, deserves to be considered the chief of that new school which attempts to re-construct by science what science had intended to destroy, in order to strike away from evangelical Christianity the pillar of the Old Testament, which Jesus and his apostles had taken as a firm support of the new faith. Men such as Professor Hengstenberg are necessary in times of mental languor, when ideas are confounded, when

\* *Biblische Theologie*, vol. i. p. 293; compare pp. 177-78, 233-239.

† *Ibid.* p. 183.



we call indiscriminately good or evil whatever disturbs our repose. Men are needed who, with cutting or even rough words, may arouse us from the lethargy in which we might run the risk of sleeping for ever, and they have done us a great service by restoring us to ourselves, to the feeling of our personal dignity, which lukewarmness or indifference tended to make us forget. And as time removes our complaints, with the lively exclamations of the *Berlin Evangelical Gazette* which called them forth, we shall remember only the proposed aim of the editor, and in doing justice to his intentions, shall be still more content with his critical and historical labours.\*

Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg was born in 1802 at Brandenburg, in the county of Mark. He was the son of a pastor, who carefully superintended his early studies, and, when still young, implanted in his mind a strong love of whatever is pure and honest. It is said that during his University studies at Bonn he was at first inclined to the philosophy of Kant, and afterwards more decidedly to that of Fries, who regarded sentiment as the criterion of religious faith. But his subsequent residence at Basle, and his intercourse when there with some members of the Reformed church, who were strictly and unreservedly orthodox, settled all his doubts, and from that time he devoted himself entirely to the defence of the letter, when he should have remembered that the spirit only giveth life.

Hengstenberg's first works show his knowledge of antiquity and the languages of the East. Those which prove him to be a learned theologian are his *Christologie des Alten Testaments*,† and his *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*.‡ The first of these works is directly opposed to all that has been written by the different schools of Rationalism on the passages of the Old Testament which seem to announce Christ; and if it is partly true that we ought to call in the aid of previously conceived doctrinal opinions in the interpretation of any passage, it is equally true that when this interpretation is not forced, when it is a necessary consequence of the narrative, it must support or rather create a doctrine. This is what Hengstenberg has wished to show when, with minute criticism, he stops at every passage alleged by supernaturalist writers in order to graft the New Testament on to the

\* His aim in the publication of the *Evangelical Gazette* was, he said, when he gave it to the world, "to show and defend the unity of evangelical truths, as contained in the Scriptures and in the Confessions of Faith, to fortify them by the Christian belief of all ages, and to join in this unity of faith all true members of the Church."

† 3 vols. Berlin, 1829-35.

‡ 2 vols. Berlin, 1831-36.



Old, by showing that the prophets and the apostles announce one and the same Christ. The *Beiträge* established the authenticity of the book of Daniel, so often attacked on account of its important prophecy respecting the time of Christ's advent and the ruin of Jerusalem; the integrity of the book of Zacharias, and the authenticity of the Pentateuch. In this last work especially the author displays vast erudition and a profound knowledge of all that could have been written against the authenticity of a work which, according to certain learned men, contains so many historical, geographical, archæological, and I know not what other errors; and with rare ability he overturns their assertions one after another, relying on the most recent evidence of impartial travellers, who certainly never thought of the Pentateuch when they were collecting information at the feet of the pyramids.

Though Hengstenberg's doctrines, which he sometimes defends as pure evangelical belief, with a warmth which Christianity cannot inspire, though these doctrines, agreeing as they do with the symbolical books of Protestant Christian communities, do not appear to us to be the creed in which future generations may unite; yet posterity will always owe esteem and gratitude to the professor of Berlin for the impulse which he has given to biblical historical studies, and they will reverence him as the restorer of sound criticism, the wise man who erred from excess of zeal, but whose piety and learning are indisputable. F. Heinrich Ranke, Hävernick of Königsberg, and Baumgarten, have shown that in following in the footsteps of such a guide they have not erred, but have obtained a surer footing on the ground on which he preceded them, by means of new discoveries which were still to be made. I think I cannot do better than close this chapter in the words of homage addressed to Hengstenberg by one of his most worthy imitators: "He it is who has held aloft the banner of science against the profaners of the Old Testament, and many, of whom I have the honour to be one, have vowed to him sincere gratitude for the zeal and courage with which he has defended the Old Testament from the humiliation inflicted on it by the different schools of theology, and has asserted the sacred rights of the church respecting it. The high degree of faith which Hengstenberg has shown in the truths which these books contain has touched and excited many who have become his followers; and this fact appears to me to be of more significant importance for the advancement of biblical science than even the perseverance which he has used to obtain the same results. Yet notwithstanding Hengstenberg's indisputable merits in his manner of treating and understanding the book of the Old Covenant, we must confess that his system rests upon a violent rupture of the chain of the development of ideas, and upon a

return to a point of view which is not historical. He had plunged too deeply into the whirlpool of continually renewed opposition to be able to see that the age of revolution and liberty through which the Old Testament has passed has not been without its benefits.”\* Baumgarten terminates these frank remarks on him whom he recognises as his guide, but to whom he does not sacrifice his independence, by showing his sympathy with Hoffmann, the author of *Weissagung und Erfüllung*,† whom he regards as the precursor of Hengstenberg, and who, according to him, has, with his far-searching discernment, not only penetrated into the reality of biblical history, but has also understood its spirit, that spirit which alone points out the way to the true and living Christ.‡

\* Baumgarten, *Theologische Commentar.* ibid. 84.

† *Weissagung und Erfüllung, im A. und N. T.* Nördlingen, 1841.

‡ Baumgarten, *Theol.* 86.

## CHAPTER XII.

CRITICAL RESEARCHES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT—HYPOTHESIS OF A PRIMITIVE GOSPEL—HYPOTHESIS OF ORAL TRADITION—EICHORN, HERDER, AND GRATZ—ECKERMANN, DE WETTE, NEUDECKER, WEISSE, STRAUSS.

THE further theologians advanced in the lamentable path marked out by Semler, the better did they understand the extent of the sacrifices demanded by criticism for its full development. But they did not see that, in depriving Christianity of the powerful support of the books of the Old Covenant, on which Christ and the apostles had thought proper to found the new religion, and in acknowledging the similarity of some accounts in the Old and New Testaments, they made a new concession to Rationalism, by attributing to the evangelical books an entirely human origin. This soon brought them to an attack, not only on the authenticity but the inspiration of the New Testament, and then to its alteration.

Eichhorn, as we have seen, esteemed the Bible no more than any other Indian, Greek, or Roman book. Wishing, however, to defend the moral character of the sacred writers, he invented a theory designed to explain the difficulties which we meet with in their works in a manner satisfactory to reason. This was the hypothesis of a primitive Gospel supposed to have been written in the Aramaic language, which, though lost to us like many other works whose loss we must regret, was nevertheless the source whence our Evangelists derived the matter for their works. Michaëlis also, to escape difficulties which he thought it wiser to cut through than to unravel, had spoken of documents anterior to our Gospels, the existence of which would explain the identity of phrases and expressions used by authors who wrote separately and without the knowledge of each other.\*

Not only the Chancellor of the University of Göttingen, but also Jean Leclerc, Bishop Marsh (in the explanations which accompany his English translation of Michaëlis), even Semler, and at a later period

\* *Einleitung*, &c., vol. ii. p. 930.

Schleiermacher,\* spoke of one common source whence our Gospels are derived. Eichhorn highly coloured this supposition, and succeeded in gaining many adherents to it. This, as we shall see immediately, went to overthrow all the divine authority of the New Testament. To suppose that the witnesses of our Lord's actions, and most frequently the hearers of his discourses, needed foreign aid in writing the life of their master, not only takes away from them the privilege of inspiration promised to them by Christ when he should send his spirit to them, but it also makes them responsible for all the voluntary or involuntary errors made in their accounts by the uncommissioned writers. This question had not been overlooked by Semler, and, in a translation of Townson's *Considerations on the Four Gospels*, he had maintained that one work or more in the Hebrew or Syro-Chaldee language must have furnished the materials for the so-called canonical Gospels. Semler, however, touched on so many subjects at once, that this early suggestion respecting the origin of our Gospels was little noticed by theologians. But Eichhorn, who took it up, and by embellishments gave it an air of plausibility, has always favoured such suppositions.

This hypothesis of Eichhorn, supported by probabilities, but in no way founded on historical testimony, rested only on some similarities in the synoptical Gospels, especially in those parts which contain the history of Jesus from his baptism to his ascension.† The theory has been answered by a supposition equally gratuitous, though better calculated to maintain the divine authority of the sacred books; this was, that Matthew may very probably have composed an historical work in Hebrew or Syro-Chaldee, and translated it at a subsequent period into Greek, making at the same time additions to the original.‡ This was only a modification of Eichhorn's system, but in a doctrinal point of view there is an immense distance between the two. But as the theories of Eichhorn and Berthold were not found sufficient to remove all doubts, others thought proper to modify and still further to complicate them. Among these was Herder, who, from his brilliant imagination and admiration for the beautiful, was much better fitted to understand the beauties of the Bible than to seek out its origin, notwithstanding the esteem in which we feel compelled to hold his historical works. He supposed that Mark, usually considered as the abbreviator of Matthew's Gospel, re-constructed it in the same Aramaic language; that Luke in his Greek work followed the primitive Gospel as a model, using what

\* *Ueber d. Schr. d. Lucas*, Part I. p. 218.

† Eichhorn, *Einleitung*, p. 162, 145.

‡ Berthold's *Einleitung*, III. p. 1, 205.

Matthew had added to it, and also making other additions derived from different sources; that the Aramaic Gospel was translated into Greek, and that the translator made use in his work of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. This theory of Herder's corresponds in some degree with those of Berthold and Eichhorn; but is it anything more than a theory?\*

We must confess that it explains pretty well the identity of words in the four sacred writers, but the improbability of it is very evident. Thus the identity of words is not continual, and in Matthew we find accounts which have a parallel only in Luke instead of in Mark, as, according to Herder's hypothesis, it ought to be; and in Luke there are narratives which can be compared only with those of Mark.†

Another modification of Eichhorn's hypothesis was made by Gratz, who thought that a primitive Gospel was composed in Aramaic, and almost immediately translated into Greek, for the use of the church at Antioch. He founds his theory on the 27th and 28th verses of the 11th chapter of Acts, which do not in any way speak of such a translation. He supposes, however, that this translation furnished to Mark and Luke, together with their own recollections, the principal part of the materials for their narrative; while Matthew composed his on the same model, but in the Aramaic tongue, and the translation which we have of it was made by one who had before him all the other accounts.‡

The reader may judge for himself whether all these vagaries of the imagination are likely to shake, in the least degree, the received belief that the four Gospels were really written by the authors whose names they bear, and who composed them from their own knowledge, with special divine assistance which prevented them from teaching error.

One of the strongest proofs adduced by Eichhorn in favour of the

\* See Herder's *Vom Erlöser der Menschen nach den drei ersten Evangelien*, 1776; *von Gottes Sohn der Welt Heiland nach Johannis Evangelium*, 1797, in his Complete Works, xi. Tübingen, 1810. In these same small works, which he entitles *Zur Religion und Theologie*, Herder ventures further. He defends the theory of an oral tradition which might have given rise to our Gospels; he goes so far as to say, what is certainly very plausible, that wherever churches were founded, by apostles or their fellow-labourers, all that they had declared was collected together, and it is thus probable that Gospels were formed bearing the names of all the apostles. If rationalists rely thus on the authority of the apostolic churches to support their theories, they surely ought to admit that authority in explaining the sense of writings originated by itself. In that case what becomes of the rationalistic principle?

† See J. C. Gieseler, *Historisch-kritischer Versuch über die Entstehung der Evangelien*. Leipzig, 1818. p. 48; also De Wette, *Einleitung*, p. 119.

‡ Moys Gratz, *Neuer Versuch die Entstehung der drei ersten Evangelien zu erklären*. Tübingen, 1812.



theory of the primitive Gospel, of which he is the principal supporter, is, that the early fathers of the church do not quote in their works the Gospels which we possess, but rather apocryphal books.\* By this fact Strauss also was led to deny the authenticity of the canonical Gospels.† It is, however, clearly proved that in the works of Barnabas, the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the writings of Clement of Rome, of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and of Polycarpus, we find passages which are either literal extracts from the canonical Gospels, or are quoted from memory in such a way as to preserve all the characteristics of a quotation.‡ I mention Eichhorn's mode of argument only to show how far even the most enlightened rationalists will venture, rather than remain steadfast to what has been believed by the Christian church in all places and at all times.

In vain men made these attempts to discover even the slightest traces of a primitive and common source which might have furnished materials for the compilation of our Gospels; but though Berthold's arguments, to prove, for example, that certain passages of the Pauline epistles§ refer to a primitive Gospel, cannot be considered as valid without perverting the natural signification of those passages, other rationalists, unwilling to give up the attempt to destroy the faith in the inspirations of the Gospels, invented another hypothesis which gave still more scope to the imagination. Eckermann, in particular, sought to make this theory consistent, and he was followed by several writers whose names have some weight in German theology. These were Kaiser, Paulus, and Gieseler.||

Oral tradition may, we imagine, be understood in different ways. Some confine it to the time of Jesus, others prolong it until the death of the apostles, while others, again, assign to it a duration of several centuries. Every one must know that the Gospel was known throughout a great part of the Roman empire before the evangelical accounts were written. It is certain that Christ's command to his apostles to teach

\* Eichhorn, *Einleitung*, &c., p. 1, 113.

† Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, vol. i.

‡ This point is scientifically explained in Neudecker's *Handbuch der Einleitung zum Neuen Testament*. Leipzig, 1840. p. 99-104. See also *Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu für Theologen und Nicht-Theologen*, by Otto Krabbe. Hamburg, 1839. p. 21-44.

§ Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. xi. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 15.

|| Eckermann, *Theologische Erklärung aller dunkeln Stellen des Neuen Testaments*. Kiel. Also his Collection printed at Altona in 1796, under the title of *Theologische Beiträge*, 6 vols. 1794-1799. Kaiser, *Biblische Theologie*. Erlangen, 1813. vol. i. p. 224. Paulus, *Theologisch-exegetisches Conservatorium*. Part. I. p. 104, seq. Gieseler, *Historisch-kritischer Versuch über die Entstehung der Evangelien*.

and baptize the people was obeyed before they fulfilled the duty of writing, which arose from circumstances only. But is this any reason for concluding that the compilers of the canonical Gospels needed in composing them, as we now have them, the aid of the information respecting the life and doctrines of Jesus, spread abroad in the churches by those who had seen and heard him? We may come to this conclusion if, like Strauss, we are consistent in our opinions, and contest, not only the inspiration, but also the authenticity of the Gospels. For those, however, who, like Eckermann and his followers, dare not venture on this, we have a right to appeal to their good sense, and ask them whether it was probable that the teachers would, in composing accounts, borrow aid from their disciples. The following passage is a specimen of the moderation with which the first author of this hypothesis expresses himself :—

“It is easy to explain the concordance of the Gospels, even supposing that the synoptical ones were written without any reciprocal knowledge of it, on the part of the authors. Matthew, according to the evidence of antiquity, first composed a Hebrew Gospel for the use of the Christians of Palestine; this Gospel, from the very nature of things, became the prototype and source of all the oral narratives, respecting Jesus and his doctrine, circulated either by the Evangelists who founded churches, or by Christians in general, whom they had taught. It is not strange, then, that Mark and Luke, who may have collected their materials at Jerusalem itself, should have received their information from eye-witnesses, and hence follows the resemblance in matter and form of their writings to those of Matthew.”\*

Thus Eckermann's hypothesis has no other foundation than the fact of the propagation of the Gospel by the word of mouth of the apostles, their disciples, and that large number of Christians, who, being zealous for the truth, sought to extend its dominion. Even if, with Gieseler, we limit the duration of this tradition to the apostolic times, the hypothesis remains equally without proof, and still makes the veracity of our Gospels depend entirely on simple narratives, which could not fail to receive alterations in passing from mouth to mouth, and destroys all belief in the special privilege conferred by Christ when he said that he himself would speak by the mouths of his disciples, and that his divine Spirit should guide them in all truth.

Professor De Wette's conjectures rest entirely on what Luke says of the works which he had consulted before undertaking his own account

\* Eckermann, *Erklärung aller dunkeln*, &c., Preface, p. xi.

of the Saviour's history.\* These, De Wette assures us, were only narratives borrowed from oral tradition. He thinks that he can in this way explain the perpetual concordance, which, he says, exists between the first and the third Evangelists, especially in the parts relating to the events in Galilee. But the learned professor, after taking a great deal of trouble to establish this concordance, forgets to mention a fact which overturns his theory. This fact is the nonconformity of the first chapters of the two Evangelists; Matthew makes the family of Jesus travel into Egypt, Luke says that they went from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and thence to Nazareth, without ever mentioning the story of the Magi; and it would be most extraordinary for him not to speak of it, if, as De Wette supposes, he made use of the same sources of information as did Matthew.

The only remark which he makes on this point is, that the authenticity of the first two chapters of Matthew has been strongly suspected, and that as Luke consulted certain memoranda or collections of facts and precepts for the materials of his first two chapters, the difficulty is thus removed. But instead of giving proofs of his assertions against Matthew, he only refers the reader to a number of writers who take his view of the question.† Thus we see that the theories of oral and of written tradition were equally unsuccessful in silencing the voice of criticism.

It may be said, certainly, that this system explains the frequent brevity of the evangelical narratives, and also the recurrence of passages in a poetical style; because it is perfectly natural that what is related for the purpose of being committed to memory, should be made as short as possible. It also accounts for the many diversities of style in the Evangelists, even without taking into consideration the diversity of their intellectual culture and of their knowledge of the Hebrew language. The Gospel, in fact, was announced in the popular language of Judea, which the apostles spoke in their intercourse with the Hebrew Jews, while others, preaching to Hellenistic Jews and to Gentiles, were compelled to make use of the Greek language, and thus arose an idiom composed of a mixture of Greek and Hebrew. Thus we may explain the occurrence of rude deviations from the ordinary harmony of their words. This is particularly the case with Matthew and Luke, and by the foregoing theory it can be accounted for without supposing that one of them made the other his model. Thus is explained also the unity of the Gospels as wholes, and yet their originality of form, since oral

\* Luke i. 1-4.

† De Wette, *Handbuch einer Einleitung*, &c. Berlin, 1834. p. 133.

tradition cannot remain the same in amount, because one person will relate more fully than another, according to circumstances; and yet each would consider it indispensable to mention certain facts of our Lord's life, the importance of which was universally recognised.

Neudecker\* also considers oral tradition as the source of our Gospels, and regards this system as the only one fitted to preserve their character of authenticity, while it explains their natural harmony, in facts as well as in classification, and even in the words and modes of expression. He supports his opinions by this passage from Wachner's *Hebrew Antiquities*: "The words of a teacher ought to be retained unchanged in the memory, just as they were uttered, so that there may be no different versions."† This, adds Neudecker, must have been the case with Jesus and the apostles, more especially as they frequently spoke in signs and parables, and in expressions stamped by a peculiar originality, which made it easy to recollect their instructions, and afterwards to relate them to the writers who wished to commit them to paper. Literal fidelity was not necessary for this; it was sufficient that the account should be exact, and related as much as possible with the essential expressions: and this is just what proved to be the case. To the list of theologians who defended these theories, I ought to add the names of Schulz and Gieseler.‡ After every possible effort had been made, by means of the theories of oral and written tradition, to explain in a natural manner the origin of the evangelical books, after all this display of wisdom in researches and suppositions, it seemed likely that at length there would be an end to these hostilities on the ancient faith. But not only did this method meet with opponents among the orthodox party; it seems that it did not satisfy even the rationalists, for it was sharply and successfully attacked by Weisse, and was soon superseded by the bolder system so ably developed by Strauss, in his *Life of Jesus*, examined in a critical point of view. Casting a penetrating glance on the systems of his predecessors, and finding them weak and illogical, though ingenious, he asked, Why this hesitation, why this timidity, when once they had acknowledged as a principle the

\* *Handbuch der Einleitung*, &c., 172.

† Wachner, *Antiquit. hebr.* 1,253.

‡ *Historisch-kritischen Versuch über die Entstehung und die frühesten Schicksale der schriftlichen Evangel.*, von Gieseler. Leipzig, 1818. p. 53-130. Schulz, *Dissertatio de Evang., quæ ante Evang. canonica in usu ecclesiæ fuisse dicitur*. Königsberg, 1812.

§ Ch. Herm. Weisse's *Evangel. Geschichte, kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet*. Leipzig, 1838. p. 10. I am not unacquainted with what Weisse has written respecting Strauss; but I have had occasion to quote it before.

rights of criticism to treat of all questions respecting the Scriptures? Seeing others falter in the work, he fancied he should confer a benefit on the cause of religion and even of Christianity, by declaring the Gospels to be the works of individuals whose names we shall perhaps never know; men who not only did not write them under the influence of oral or written tradition as generally understood, that is to say, in the time of the apostles, but composed them at a far subsequent period. Thus the facts which they relate may have reached them in a mythical form, shown in those strong colours and those colossal proportions in which what has astonished one generation is transmitted to the next. The noise which Strauss's book made in Germany was but faintly echoed in the other countries of Europe. Yet, when calmly reflecting on the subject, we may ask why Germany was so excited by it, and especially why Rationalism launched its arrows with so much irritation against a book to the production of which it had contributed. We can easily understand the sorrow of the supernaturalists, and their efforts to counteract the pernicious effects of a system which completely overturned the ancient faith;\* but Rationalism, which employed all the power of the press to crush, by the weight of its own celebrity, the audacious one who dared advise it to be more sincere, by placing the keys under the gate of the church, has done more than show its inconsistency—it has made itself ridiculous, since Strauss only showed the consequences of all the systems which have been openly adopted since the time of Semler, and which unlimited free inquiry in religious subjects introduced into Protestantism.

\* “Dr. Strauss's *Leben Jesu*,” says a young writer, “is a sword which has deeply wounded both Rationalism and Supernaturalism. Its author resembles Fernando Cortez, who burned his ships and rushed on to the conquest of new land;” and a little further on—“Strauss is the Spinoza of the new eternal Gospel, whose certain advent Lessing foresaw.”—(*Die Religion in ihrem Begriffe*, &c., by Moritz Carrière. Weilburg, 1841. p. 175.) Carrière says, that he himself derived his Christianity from the writings of Fichte and Hegel, of Schiller and Göethe, rather than from those of Hengstenberg and Twisten, of Wegscheider and Staudenmeyer. (*Telegraph von Deutschland*, 1842, No. 33.)

[See *Voices of the Church*, in reply to the *Leben Jesu* of Dr. Strauss, by the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.; and the article ‘Gospel,’ in *The People's Dictionary of the Bible*.—E.]



## CHAPTER XIII.

NEW ATTEMPTS OF PHILOSOPHY TO RE-CONSTRUCT DOCTRINE—FRIES,  
FICHTE, SCHELLING AND HIS FIRST DISCIPLES—RELIGIOUS PHI-  
LOSOPHY OF HEGEL AND JACOBI—ANCILLON.

PHILOSOPHY had learned from Kant to be a rival of theology, which could not dispense with its aid, though always treating it as a servant. Proud of seeing that theology could do nothing without it, but in every difficult crisis took refuge under its wings, and borrowed from it the means of defence against all aggressors, philosophy now wished to show, that not only was it worthy to assert its independent existence in friendly alliance with theology, in accordance with the views of all enlightened minds, but that it could also supplant its rival, and occupy the throne with equal *éclat* and success. By the mouth of Kant it had already compelled theology to acknowledge absolute moral freedom. This avowal took away the corner-stone from the Christian edifice, since Christianity exists only to show that it is impossible for man to work out his moral regeneration by his own unaided efforts. By applying allegory to Scripture, Kant made it yield only the residuum of the austere law of duty. But man needs more than the knowledge of the law, and Kant's philosophy treated only of the law and the power of observing it. It is necessary to do more than merely to excite man's will. Unless we point out the path which he must pursue to attain his proposed aim, we have only shown him the sword which will inevitably smite him. Kant's philosophy had another fault—it addressed itself only to the human conscience, and man has more than a conscience; he has reason, sentiment, and a soul susceptible of holy emotions and of pure thoughts. It was not long before minds trembling under the yoke of a too severe system proudly rose, and asked if in existence there was nothing better to satisfy the moral wants which the criticism of pure reason had only lulled to sleep. There soon appeared, with astonishing rapidity, new systems of philosophy, and thence new movements in theology. The names of Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, occur to our minds in mentioning the heirs of the Kantian philosophy, and these I shall speak of before proceeding to those of our own time,

who dispute the palm even with the most celebrated of their predecessors.\*

It is true, that during the life of Kant, and even after his death, there were very many writers who thought that they taught either his philosophy or modifications of it, and recognised its founder as their master, while in reality they only preserved his forms and made use of his terminology. Krug alone can be considered to have really developed the Kantian system, and of him and his important influence on theology I have already spoken. He was followed by Fries and his school, who differed from Kant both in his method and in the development of his doctrine, particularly in regard to the conception of faith. According to Fries, faith is nothing more than the presentiment (*Ahnung*) by means of which we conceive of the physical world as an internal manifestation of things.† The results of the Kantian philosophy in regard to the wants of practical and moral life were not, as I have said, sufficient for that period of great intellectual agitation. This system became, as did the school of Socrates, a starting point for speculative philosophy. There was, first, the idealism of Fichte, which, gradually losing its primitive rudeness, became at last a profound doctrine respecting the eternal connection of God and the spirit, with spirit, as the essence of all things. This idealism was only a necessary consequence of the criticism of Kant, and one at which he himself would have arrived had it not been for one of those inconsistencies to which philosophers are subject when they follow in the least degree the guidance of good sense. It is well known that Fichte made all objective existences subordinate to subjective ideas; for the *Ego*, wherever it exists, is all, and nature in its universality can only be its offspring. It is the shade which necessarily accompanies the reality; and what, when it thus contemplates itself, remains for this powerful, this unique, and absolute principle, if not a loving reference of its phenomenal life to this universal spirit? According to Fichte's opinion, this was the mode

\* Rosenkrantz has published a work entitled *Schelling und Hegel*. Königsberg, 1843; and one volume of *Lectures on Schelling*. Dantzic, 1843; which give an excellent idea of the essential opinions of the two philosophers.

† Rosenkrantz designates the views of Fries and his plans of improvement as a wearisome and tame modification of Kant's speculations, the whole aim of which is, that man should examine his own mind, and accept the ideas of truth, goodness, and beauty.—(Rosenkrantz, *Geschichte der Kantischen Philosophie*. Leipzig, 1840. p. 431.) J. F. Fries was born at Barby, in 1773, and died in 1844, as Professor of Physics in the University of Jena. His principal works are—*Practische Philosophie*. Heidelberg, 1818-1832; *Kritische Anthropologie*, &c. Heidelberg, 1828-1831; *Julius und Evagoras oder die Schönheit der Seele*. Heidelberg, 1822; and *Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung*. Jena, 1823.

in which the Apostle John understood Christianity ; but we can hardly imagine that, if such were the language of the apostle, he would have founded an idealistically Christian church in the towns of Asia Minor. Fichte founded no such society, and his influence has been almost as small in the church as in the universities. Perhaps he himself voluntarily aided in making his doctrines ineffectual, by modifying them.\* But, notwithstanding his grand errors in relation to Christianity, he has rendered to religion and morality an indisputable service, by showing the impossibility of materialism even in an unreflecting age.

A different influence was exerted by Schelling on the theology of his time. He was Fichte's contemporary, and succeeded him in the philosophical chair at Jena. He began by applying the idealism of his predecessor to the principal doctrines of the Greek and Catholic faith, considering them as the principal features of the development of the world, and, at the same time, as the fundamental thought of the divine consciousness which had been revealed.† Schelling soon transformed his doctrine into the objective, which was the all, the absolute,—an assemblage of blind powers in the beginning, but animated by an irresistible tendency to develop itself, and to manifest itself by creations gradually rising to infinity, and which, in tending to perfection, gives always a greater consciousness, especially when referring to the human intelligence. The theory, thus explained, presented no new features, since we see in it the ancient Pantheism of which Germany had learned something from the Italian Bruno, and especially from Spinoza, the philosopher of Amsterdam. But there was novelty in Schelling's ideas respecting the perfect parallelism of the ideal and the real, the subject and the object, and in the form with which he always opposed more and more Fichte's doctrine of idealism.‡

The doctrine of identity is this, viz., that the phenomenal world or

\* Bretschneider, *Systematische Entwicklung*. In this work, p. 53, may be found a list of all the literature respecting the writings of this philosopher.

[The last edition of this valuable work (the fourth) appeared at Leipzig in 1841. Since then the literature, both on the present topic and every other, has very much increased. Additional information may be found in *Universal-Wörterbuch der Theolog. Kirchen-Relig. Literatur*, von Dr. J. T. L. Danz. Leipzig, 1843 ; and in *Handbuch der Theolog. Literatur*, von Dr. G. B. Winer, 4th edit. Leipzig.—E.]

† Schelling was born in 1775, at Léonberg, in Württemberg, and has, since 1798, filled philosophical chairs in different universities. He is now professor at Berlin.

‡ *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*. Leipzig, 1797. *Von der Weltseele*. Hamburg, 1798. *Bruno*. Berlin, 1802. *Philosophie und Religion*. Tübingen, 1804.

nature is not only the reflection or shadow which necessarily accompanies the eternal Spirit, but that this pure reality is Spirit made visible.\* From this it follows that the philosophy of nature and transcendental idealism are of equal necessity, and become, completing each other, the foundation of philosophical science. The business of philosophy, therefore, is to show this identity of nature and of spirit, which identity, however, is full of oppositions.

But before all existences, before all duality, there was a being, the primitive source of all beings, and this being can only be conceived of as absolute indifference, totally separated from all opposition. This being, having in itself the foundation and reason of its existence, is God, who reveals Himself by making a reflection of Himself, and by this act produces unity and plurality, the finite and the infinite.†

God being thus revealed in and by nature, Schelling developes his opinions on evil and on human liberty, which has all the characteristics of necessity, on the revelation of God in the history of the earliest times, and by His astonishing appearance in a man who called himself the Christ.‡ In this part of his works, the imagination of the poet is so richly displayed, that it almost makes us forget the feebleness of the philosopher's demonstrations. The philosophy of nature, however, not only found warm partisans, who applied it to philosophy and physics, but, as we shall soon see, it was applied also to theological questions by distinguished men, such as Blasche, Troxler, Eschenmayer, Steffens, Daub, Schwarz, and others less known, who, to the great astonishment of Schelling himself, deduced from it doctrines more or less in accordance with orthodoxy.

It is now well known in the world that Schelling has abjured his philosophy of identity, and that, as I have stated elsewhere, on the best authority,§ he now acknowledges a God, the sovereign Master of the universe, who is only what He wills, and that creation consequently is a pure act of His will.

Can it be true, as it is reported, that Schelling, like Schleiermacher, who is reproached with similar inconsistencies, has declared that he has always been on the same ground, but that he now occupies a more elevated position? We cannot answer this question unless his lectures on mythology and revelation are printed. We cannot judge a writer

\* *Ueber das Verhältniss, &c.* Hamburg, 1806.

† *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. i. p. 497. Landshut, 1809. *Darlegung des Verhältnisses, &c.*, p. 53. Tübingen, 1806.

‡ *Philosophische Schriften*, 429, 456, 457.

§ *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Spinoza*, p. 288; and see generally, chapters 21, 23, and 24, for more details respecting Schelling and his ancient school.

from what he is made to say by disciples, frequently unskilful, or adversaries, always in quest of equivocal words, to show, in the least favourable light, the sentiments of any great man who presents himself before us. However, as friends and enemies seem to agree respecting the fundamental principles of Schelling's new philosophy, we shall presently give a sketch of it, drawn from the least suspicious sources. Schelling founded, in the absolute, all the antitheses of the object and the subject, of the ideal and the real; and he explained the fall of man and the sin which followed, not by the abuse which he made of liberty, but by the use of it; for man detached himself by it from the unity at which he must arrive ere order can be established. This expression of fall led to those of reparation, reconciliation, original sin, and of a holy life to be gained, which is no other than the sanctification demanded by the Gospel. We can understand how theologians, distressed by the sad consequences of empirical and philosophical Rationalism, thought that they had found the means of re-establishing Christianity, by transforming it into a philosophical system, in which all the doctrines venerated in the church should hold an honourable position. But as it is remarked by the vulgar rationalists, whom these pretensions of philosophy have particularly displeased, if speculative theology has re-established the words, it has not re-established the ideas. It was by altering the traditional signification of words, and by using them only to clothe new ideas, that a doctrinal system, which was not really ancient, was made to pass as such.

Among those adherents to the philosophy of Schelling who have applied it to theology,\* we may first mention Eschenmayer, who, though not acknowledging the literal meaning of the confessions of faith established in the church, has, however, by a veritable trick of argument, arrived at a belief decidedly evangelical. He has not in the least attacked the supernaturalist principle, but may rather be accused of sometimes carrying it so far as to lapse into real mysticism, as in his writings on the relation between the visible and invisible worlds. Eschenmayer was born in 1770, at Neuenburg, in Würtemberg. He is a learned naturalist, a skilful physician, and fills well the chair of philosophy at Tübingen. When he first came before the public, he seemed to be somewhat inclined to Kantism, but he soon embraced the philosophy of Schelling, which he has ever since declared to be the best calculated to prepare the way to a salutary restoration of the faith. His works are numerous, and refer to many subjects in every province of

\* This is not the place to speak of its application to other sciences as made by Oken, Walther, and many others.



nature, but his *Philosophie der Religion*, and his work on the doctrine of Hegel, give the best idea of the tendency of his religious opinions. He has been justly reproached by supernaturalists with regarding the accessaries of a doctrine as its fundamental principles, and with giving as mathematically demonstrated truth, mere probabilities; with a want of clearness in his doctrinal opinions, and with a want of conciseness in his conception of them, which prevents their becoming an united whole. Were it not for these defects, Eschenmayer's system would by no means be wanting in harmony, especially as, unlike the famous naturalist Oken, who, seeing nothing beyond nature, thinks and writes that everything is born and perishes with it, he excels in describing other things besides mere animal life and the material world.

Blasche and Richmann, again, have taken different views. They saw in Schelling's philosophy only a mode of making human nature divine by identifying it with the divine nature. He, says Richmann, who separates himself from God, (and we all do so by sin,) cannot expect any kind of immortality, for there is no immortality where there is no life, and can there be life where God is not? That man, only, who feels his intimate and indissoluble union with the divinity, can flatter himself with the hope of a supremely happy immortality.\* The loss of immortal destiny is coldly announced by the theologian Blasche also, who died in 1832. He considers the life eternal promised by Christ only as the general life of the universe, and thinks that this promise is fulfilled in the continual change of the life of individuals.†

External nature was the book where Steffens early loved to seek solutions of the grave questions which interest the whole of humanity. It seemed, for a time, that the long-misunderstood theories of Spinoza would be sufficient to satisfy the craving desire which he felt to establish some kind of unity in his varied knowledge; but he was too poetical to devote to the service of a materialised idealism the best qualities of the mind and heart. He therefore warmly embraced the philosophy of Schelling, when in the course of his travels he not only became acquainted with the system, but also had some intimate intercourse with its author.‡ He thought that he here saw the true solution

\* Richmann's *Gemeinfassliche Darstellung und Würdigung aller gehaltreichen Beweisarten für Gott und für Unsterblichkeit der Seele*. Stuttgart, 1817.

† See principally his work on the attributes of God. *Die göttlichen Eigenschaften*. Erfurt, 1831.

‡ Heinrich Steffens, who has acquired a reputation in the provinces of poetry, philosophy, and natural history, was born at Stavangor, in Norway, in 1773. After filling professorial chairs at Jena, Halle, and Breslau, he was invited, in 1831, to Berlin, where he was Professor of Physics until his death in 1844.

of unity in multiplicity, which he had sought for in vain in Spinoza's theory. In Steffens, a writer of uncommon power, we see the old volunteer who not only courageously opposed the invaders of his adopted country, but also communicated to his pupils the enthusiasm by which he was himself animated. He was, however, of a profoundly subjective nature, and would willingly have sacrificed all the objectivity of his knowledge to live the internal life which he so well described and felt, if his naturally expansive mind had not sought to re-establish the equilibrium of its powerful faculties. The memoirs of himself, which Steffens published, and where he relates his own experience with so much grace and simplicity, have been so popular, that I may be allowed to give here an analysis of that part referring more particularly to the subject under our consideration.\* It seems that the mind of Steffens, like so many others, was tossed on the waves of human opinion before he arrived at the rest which, as he assures us, he found in the purely Lutheran faith. He was first enamoured of the system of Kant, and thought that with his strong mind he comprehended its whole import; but his wandering imagination, not finding rest there, opened to him a new prospect, in vague sentimentalities in the style of Jacobi. This, however, was only a transition state, for the study of Jacobi's opinions first made him acquainted with Lessing, by whose works he was introduced to Spinoza. The opinions of this philosopher had the greatest influence on his mode of thought, though the poetry of Shakspeare and Göethe formed the charm of his leisure. The moral power of the philosopher of Amsterdam, the boldness of his conceptions, the numerous mental gifts with which he was endowed, made Steffens imagine that only by pursuing the same object should he obtain repose of mind. Without positively declaring that he had frankly adopted the spiritualistic Pantheism of Spinoza, he says enough of him to show that, "at a period when all his religious recollections of the past had vanished," he esteemed himself happy in having met with a philosopher who made him love virtue for its own sake, and transform it into religion. Those who are intimately acquainted with the opinions of Spinoza will understand how it was that his disciple, at the very moment when he thought that he perfectly understood ethics, felt how much he had lost. "All living nature," says he, "the whole of varied life, seemed to me faded and grey; all my wishes and hopes I had left behind me, for I was obliged to confess to myself that as such they contained falsehood, and their true importance was manifest only when they had vanished. This total abnegation seemed to me to destroy something dear and holy

\* *Was ich erlebte?* 4 vols. Berlin, 1841.

which at any price I must retain." But Steffens did not long do homage to the God of Spinoza. With his eminently poetical nature, he felt ill at ease in a system which petrified everything before his eyes, because he saw only one aspect of it—that which relates to space. But despairing thoughts soon weakened his faith in it, and in the memory of the past he found strength to struggle successfully against himself, and to give glory to the God of Christians who made the victory easy to him. He makes one statement which is well worthy of notice; it is, that the system of Spinoza was far from having made him an Atheist. "What was in agitation within me," says he, "was by no means a consciousness fixed and bounded by mathematical demonstration; it was rather that great whole which began to exist and pulsate in me, so that this pulsation, like a breath of the living God, beat even in the smallest particle of nature and the most trifling events of history. I had, besides, not yet found the place whence the living motion of the whole might be seen; but I knew that it must be accessible to the earnest seeker."

One of his most remarkable works is doubtless his *Anthropologie*,\* where the majestic concord between man and the surrounding universe is described with a rare power of imagination, and a profound knowledge of the subject. In opposition to the Hegelian philosophy, for which he has no love, Steffens seeks especially to raise human dignity by his doctrine of personality, which, when once firmly established, enables him to develop his doctrine of immortality, which is its happy result. His *Religious Philosophy* is full of the same spirit of evangelical piety; and in this work it is his peculiar effort to arrive at a reconciliation of faith and philosophy by a full knowledge of Christian sentiment. But it was impossible that his method should be free from error, since, wishing to find all the doctrines of the old Lutheran system in the philosophy of identity, he may be justly reproached with reviving the heresy of the Sabellians, who confounded the personalities in the Deity in the unity of the Father, because they had not penetrated sufficiently deep into the idea of individuality to deduce from it the Christian doctrine as conceived by the ancient church.† Hegelianism has indulged in a free criticism on the tendencies of this Lutheranism restored by

\* *Anthropologie*, 2 vols. Berlin, 1832. Several novels of Steffens, such as *Die Familien Wulseth und Leith*, are also a sort of poetical Anthropology in which the manners of the 18th century are admirably depicted.

† *Christliche Religions Philosophie*, von Henrich Steffens. The first part comprises theology, and the second ethics. Breslau, 1839. This work and the *Anthropologie* have secured for their author an indisputable position in philosophical science.

philosophy, and Rosenkranz, in the *Jahrbuch* of Berlin, has endeavoured to point out defects in every part of the work. This is the darkness which, thinking itself light, endeavours to drive away the last ray which troubles it. We may judge of it from these short quotations:—"In soterology," says the critic, "Steffens considers the Holy Spirit only as a purifying and sanctifying agent, instead of regarding it as the totality of the idea of God, in which the existence of the Father and the Son is only the *moment*, and of which the Spirit forms the unity. The Holy Spirit is really so only by the Spirit; hence it follows that the Christian church is not only, as Steffens imagines it to be, a pious community, allied collectively by individual faith in Christ the Saviour, but the community is itself the divine spirit in which the Father and the Son are really present. By this definition, is not the Christian church placed in a higher position than that which Steffens himself assigns to it? We must represent it to ourselves as the organisation without which we could not imagine the Divine Spirit, for the church is not only a society of saints, it is also the eternal perfection of the existence of the Spirit. In eschatology, Steffens seeks to preserve for the future judgment an abstract future, because he does not yet understand the church to be the realisation of the liberty which in history outstrips history. The divine life of the church is the absolute enjoyment of the Divine Spirit, which glorifies all the past and the future in the living union of God and man by the mediation of the God-man, fills it with the plenitude of a felicitous present, and even admits the future judgment as the *moment* of its eternal *process*, and withdraws it from all the relations of time." \*

The theory of Schwarz is more positive, and has a more direct application to the divine life. He had had occasion to superintend the education of young children while pastor of a parish near Giessen, his native town, and he knew that it is impossible to implant and develop religious feelings in the soul by mere philosophical speculations, but that for this end a purpose must be given to sentiment, so that it may not spend its strength in vague abstractions. The literary activity shown by Schwarz, who has been professor of theology at the University of Heidelberg since its re-organisation in 1804, has been entirely with a view to improve the moral system of schools, and his writings on this subject are numerous. He wished to show that philosophy, to

\* *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, Nov. 1840. Börne, in a moment of temper, has called Steffens a neophyte of faith and an apostate of science; but Th. Mundt replies to him, that Steffens had no other foundation than speculation for his pietism of sentiment. (*Literatur unsers Zeitalters*. Berlin, 1842. p. 508.)



be worthy of the name, ought to lead to the highest morality, and for this purpose he published in 1793 his science of morality, which he has since revised, and printed in the third edition in 1830, under the title of *Christliche Ethik*.

In this work, principally, Schwarz explains his religious views, which are strongly coloured by the philosophy of Schelling, and impressed with marks of Christianity, which empirical rationalists have termed mysticism. Schwarz, in fact, insists on the individually immortal destinies of man, which can be accomplished only by the fulfilment of God's will, through faith in Christ. For from this faith only flows the highest science, the purest light, the truly divine life, and there can be nothing greater for man on earth than to become a Christian.\*

With these deep convictions, it is not to be wondered at that he laid the foundations of morality in a living and animated faith in him who showed in his person the beau ideal of morality. We must not, however, despise all the moral systems which rest on other grounds. The Christian moralist can make use of them also, but he must choose from the vast field of their operation those stones polished for this purpose by human reason, and must join them to the Christian materials from which the moral edifice ought to be constructed. We will give Schwarz's answer to the ignorant zeal which made use of the word mysticism, when strong arguments would have been necessary to overthrow the moral superiority of his ethical system: "He to whom the principle that Christ dwells in us, appears to be mysticism, must blame only the apostolic word for it; or if we are reproached with calling Christ the human consciousness, we might appeal to Kant, who also presents him to our minds as the ideal of pure humanity; we might appeal, too, to Ficinius, who calls him virtue revealed to men! The spirit of an age is not invariable, but when we have found a sure foundation for truth, it will not change. For us, my friends, we will remain with Christ, and will seek our supreme good in intimate communion with him, so that by his spirit he may sanctify our whole existence. It is for you who seek to obtain this good that I have written this work." And then, as a fundamental principle of Christian morality, he gives this command of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." This principle he derives from the fundamental idea of the Christian religion, viz., the immediate revelation of God in Jesus, and through him the foundation of the divine kingdom among men.† We thus see

\* *Nicht höheres kann der Mensch sein, als ein Christ.*

† *Evangelisch-christliche Ethik*, vol. i. Preliminary Dissertation, §§ 34 & 41.



that Schwarz, as well as Steffens, needs only more orthodox opinions respecting Christ, to deduce from Schelling's philosophy principles favourable to the restoration of pure Christianity.

The efforts of Daub were the most important of all those made to re-model Christian doctrine by Schelling's philosophy. He, like Schwarz, was a theological professor at Heidelberg, and his influence in some degree counteracted the effect of the natural and far too amusing explanations given by Dr. Paulus in his course of exegesis. The great fault of Daub was his indecision and hesitation between different systems of philosophy. His opinions at first partook of the nature of Kantism; they were afterwards re-modelled on the philosophy of identity, and in the later years of his life he adopted the Hegelian system. When under the influence of this last philosophy, he said that the ordinary faith of the church is a pure illusion, the Supernaturalism *of our day* is folly, and Rationalism a self-deception.

From the many different phases through which Daub passed in the course of his scientific career, he has been called the Talleyrand of German philosophy. From the revolutionary period of Kant, he passed to the empire of Schelling, which prepared the way for him to swear allegiance to the restoration of Hegel, who claimed tribute from the whole kingdom of the new philosophy.

But, adds his biographer, Daub, as an individual, is the direct opposite of Talleyrand. The statesman obeyed only the impulses of egotism, and could justify his conduct only by his political position, and not on moral grounds. Daub, on the contrary, was actuated only by the love of truth, and preferred to be accused of inconsistency, rather than maintain what he knew to be unfounded.\* The reproaches, bitter as they were, which he endured, did not prevent him from declaring that the philosophy of Kant, from the very nature of things, must lead to the systems of Fichte and Schelling, and thence to that of Hegel. It is said that his faith in the Christian religion was firmly established during all these changes, because they were changes in form only, and not in the principles on which the different systems were supported in his mind. His only aim was to establish historical Christianity in the minds of men on a scientific basis. Thus we may see that it is not with justice that vulgar Rationalism has rejected speculative theology *in general*, and that of Daub particularly, on the grounds of its being idealism.† This expression *idealism*, in fact, can be applied only to a system which recognises truth in ideas alone, and not in facts. Now, a Christian philosophy, which recognises ideas in their historical reality,

\* *Erinnerungen an Karl Daub*, by Rosenkranz. Berlin, 1837.

† Wegscheider, *Institutiones*, p. 132.

cannot be thus designated. Did not Daub struggle bravely against the giants of subjective and objective idealism? It must be said in his praise, that whether he plunged into the immense ocean of objective nature, or climbed the giddy heights of subjective idealism, he never lost sight of the figure of Christ advancing on the waters, and ready to assist him, like Peter, in walking over the moving surface of the abyss, without fear of being swallowed up therein. According to Daub, religion manifests itself in us by the recognition of a God united to the feeling of our dependence upon him. Now, this religion necessarily exists in a heart which has faith in the Gospel of Jesus, and passing through stages of continual improvement effected in the lapse of ages by assemblies of the church (councils), it has come down to our own time, though in a symbolical form, since our intellect could understand divine nature only in human nature. We have, however, at the same time, a consciousness of its symbolical form, and this serves in no small degree to purify our sentiments and thoughts. It is the part of Christian doctrine to develope, and to show the necessity for developing, this positively symbolical system: thus our religion becomes a science; but a science glorified by the divine idea. To disprove still more clearly the accusation of being merely a system of philosophy, the theology of Daub adds that the doctrine ordinarily taught is the necessary preamble to the other; it furnishes the historical materials which the true doctrine penetrates according to its symbolical principles. These materials furnished by doctrine make the speculative theology of Daub rest upon the authority of the Bible, and as the Bible, in its historical nature, is the starting point of all doctrine, how are we to prove the divinity of its narratives? By the intimate connexion between doctrines and facts. Thus the historical part of it never presents itself to us as a mere relation of facts, possessing only a transient interest; it is imbued with the eternal essence of the very truth of the doctrines which are founded on those facts.

If we ask from this theologian a guarantee of these truths, he will speak to us of the inspiration existing in the identity of the human consciousness and the divine, and will tell us that the Saviour understood this identity better than any one else. It existed in him in the greatest degree, so that God became man in Christ, and it is the form under which he appeared on earth, that is the historical fact of Christianity.\*

These were the opinions by which Daub's early years were characterised, and they gained for him great celebrity. The universities were

\* See his *Theologomena S. doctrinæ de relig. christ.*, &c. Heidelberg, 1806.

beginning to be somewhat satiated with vulgar Rationalism, and they were very glad to compare this new system with the manœuvres practised by Paulus and Wegscheider to deduce from the Gospel something different from the ancient faith. Daub, however, was not satisfied with his own conclusions, and had visions of a new form of truth. He was struck by the mode in which Marheinecke treated doctrine, and sought to penetrate into his spirit. He thus came to meditate his desertion from the ranks of Schelling to the Hegelian camp. This desertion was not generally known until after his death, when his editors communicated to the public his doctrinal lectures, which plainly show the Hegelian nature of his opinions. He had, however, proved his change of opinion in a work published a short time before his death, which treats of the dogmatical theology of our day, or the egotism in the science of faith and of its doctrinal points.\* We are surprised to find in this work, written by an old man entitled to our respect on so many considerations, a prevailing bitterness of tone and a severe manner of deciding questions concerning which the author had himself been long in a state of uncertainty. He could not forget the sermons in the Kantian spirit which he had published at the commencement of his literary career,† nor his transition from Kant to Schelling. Modesty is surely especially becoming in those who have experienced how much it costs to attain mental repose. But human nature seems to be such, that intolerance and egotism are the lot of every man who has not yet arrived at a complete knowledge of the truth, even when he inveighs against these two passions, condemned by the Gospel. This unfortunately was the case with the learned professor, who has, notwithstanding, left lasting traces of his influence at Heidelberg. The leading idea in the *Theologie jetziger Zeit*, is that all the opinions agitated in our times, with the single exception of Hegel's doctrines, are the productions of egotism, and that they are made ridiculous by being confined to the domain of morality, when they should rather launch forth into the infinite fields of science. A singular assertion, truly, for an old adherent of Kant! And yet in these pretensions Daub only follows in the footsteps of his master. Hegel saw no evil save in the negation of his philosophy: all which does not, according to it, surmount the finite limits of the human mind, he calls evil (*Böse*), in the same way that he gives that name to the knowledge

\* *Die dogmatische Theologie jetziger Zeit, oder die Lebssucht in der Wissenschaft des Glaubens und seiner Artikel.* Heidelberg, 1833. In the same spirit, but more fully developed, are written his academical lectures on philosophy and theology, which have been published since his death, by his friends Marheinecke and Dittenberger. 6 vols. Berlin, 1838-41.

† *Predigten nach Kantischen Grundsätzen.* Giessen, 1794.

of our own individuality (*Wissen seiner Einzelheit*), and to the return of subjectivity on objectivity.\* These words of the master show us that the meaning given by his disciple to the word egotism, is the attachment of the subject to its individuality. Are not the discussions necessitated by the absolute truths of Hegel equally egotistical, since they express the variable thoughts of the subject? Is not the total deprivation of subjectivity equivalent to identity with the object, and does it not realise the Pantheism which this school professedly wished to avoid? It was not only Supernaturalism that was wounded by this new form of polemics; Rationalism, which had been pitilessly scourged by Daub, accused him of having distorted its principles in order to make his triumph over them seem the more complete; and we must confess that the confusion of ideas in which Daub entangled himself to gain credit for originality, frequently caused him to attack what was in fact a reality. But Daub's opinions have little influence in the schools, and only add another and a somewhat disconnected chapter to the history of the vagaries of the human mind. It will, therefore, be better to give some details respecting the opinions of the philosopher who was his guide, and who has disciples occupying the attention of the public far more than does Daub.

It would be folly to think of giving a complete exposition of Hegel's opinions on philosophy and religion, within our narrow limits. But since we have shown above their tendency, and are speaking of their influence on the theology of our day, we must make some inquiry into the religion of a man who now engages the attention of all philosophical parties, and to whom his disciples seriously ascribe opinions of a nature very equivocal in the eyes of Christians.

Hegel was born at Stuttgart, in 1770. He early devoted himself to the studies of philosophy and the natural sciences, and when he left the University he was able to teach their elements to the young people, the care of whose education was entrusted to him, first at Berne, and afterwards at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. This employment, however interesting its nature, did not please him more than it had pleased Fichte and Kant, who had gladly abandoned it, and, like them, Hegel seized the first favourable opportunity of entering on the career of a professor. He made his debüt at Jena in the character of a professor and writer. The philosophy of Schelling was then just rising into notice, and as it appeared to him to unite the conditions of the future, he applied himself to develope its principles, and show their use in science. But he afterwards thought that he had discovered the weak side of this system. It was not until after his installation in the

\* *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*. Heidelberg. pp. 363, 460.



philosophical chairs of Heidelberg (1816) and of Berlin (1818), at which latter city he succeeded Fichte, that he founded that philosophy of the mind which he has dared to call the final expression of the human intellect, in spite of his own fundamental principle, which fixes no limits to the development of the mind.

Our purpose, however, is especially to show the religious part of Hegel's system. We must therefore state that his first religious studies were purely rationalistic. Rosenkranz tells us that Tübingen was the scene of Hegel's first attacks on the reigning theology.\* He was then only a student, yet he took part in all the religious disputes which were excited principally by the *Life of Jesus*, published by the venerable Hess, of Zurich, a book which gave rise to so many works respecting the plan which Jesus must have formed for the realisation of his views.† Hegel, as we have said, took part in these disputes, and he showed his predilection for philosophy, which he would exalt, even at the expense of theology, by instituting comparisons, after the fashion of the day, between Christ and Socrates, and pointing out the superiority of the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary. When in Switzerland, he abandoned these notions, borrowed from the Naturalism of Lessing and Reimarus. Without caring more for the fate of Socrates, he followed Jesus of Nazareth, step by step, hoping to find in his terrestrial life something which religion and philosophy would agree to acknowledge as truth. The result of these studies was a *Life of Jesus*, yet unpublished, in which Christ is considered as a divine man, in whom all is pure and sublime, and who made himself remarkable chiefly by his triumphs over vice, falsehood, hatred, and the servile spirit of his age. Nothing is said of miracles in this history, and yet Rosenkranz, who has seen it, affirms that it produces a sublime impression on the mind.‡ Hegel represents Christ in the fulness of his human reality, in his teachings, as well as in his connexion with his disciples. In his earnest desire to do better than Bahrdr and Venturini, he en-

\* In the interesting work in the *Literarisch-hist. Taschenbuch*, published by Prutz. Leipzig, 1843.

† We may become acquainted with it, either in Hase's *Life of Jesus*, 3rd edit. p. 33-35, or in Bretschneider (*Systematische Entwicklung aller in der Dogmatik*, &c., 4th edit., p. 229).

‡ Rosenkranz says that in passing over in silence the miraculous part of the Gospel, Hegel had no intention of facilitating his task, since he had accounted to himself for the philosophical idea of miracle. He quotes a passage from Hegel, in which that philosopher says that it is as impossible to decide by reason the question of the possibility of miracles as it would be to give to a Moor the fair complexion of a European;§ and then says that the best way to reconcile adversaries is to show their truth in the imagination.



deavours by paraphrases to raise the words of Christ to a loftiness of meaning far remote from the simplicity of the evangelical words.

But in these preparatory studies, Hegel did not confine himself to the elements of the positive part of the Christian faith; he sought to discover a synthesis which should explain the reason of Christianity in the world, and of its historical development. Like Leibnitz, who had reconciled reason and faith by explaining the difficulties experienced by the minds of his age in understanding truths said to be evangelical; like Kant, who had proposed the religion of reason as the best antidote to Naturalism; like Fichte, who made use of the fourth Gospel to represent Christianity as the acquisition of the happiness to which man aspires; like Schelling, who, from the beginning of his philosophical career, sketched for himself an historical construction of Christianity;—Hegel also wished to find a positive religion which should at the same time be a philosophy. Great men cannot endure duality in their religion and philosophy. He applied himself to reflection on the generating principle of universal life. This he found in love, considered as the action of self in another without ceasing to be self, returning to self to pass again into another. These reflections led him to his system of dialectics. He has himself said, in his *Phenomenology*, and in his *Philosophy of Religion*, that the nature of his system might be represented as the action of divine love.\*

Hegel's philosophy may, then, be reduced to three parts, which may be designated as the logic which, as the science of ideas, accomplishes the process of didactic development—a philosophy of nature which has quite a different meaning from that of Schelling; for with Hegel it is only the expression of the passage to another being, and the philosophy of the mind, which considers thought reflecting itself on itself, and showing itself by the mind in the sciences of law and morality, in the state, history, religion, and the arts. The religion which is deduced from this system may be said to consist of the objective existence of the infinite mind in the finite, for mind is only for mind, consequently God exists only in thinking and being thought of. In the philosophy of nature, intelligence and God are lost in objective nature. Hegel allows

\* Compare this fundamental idea of the religious philosophy of Hegel with the following proposition of Spinoza :—"Mentis amor intellectualis erga Deum est ipse Dei amor, quo Deus se ipsum amat, non quatenus infinitus est, sed quatenus per essentiam humanæ mentis, sub specie eternitatis consideratam, explicare potest . . . . . Mentis amor actio est qua mens se ipsam contemplatur, concomitante idea dei tanquam causa, id est activâ, quo deus, quatenus per mentem humanam explicari potest se ipsum contemplatur concomitante idea sui; atque adeo hic mentis amor pars est infiniti amoris, quo Deus se ipsum amat."—(*Ethics*, Pars V. prop. 36.)

them a distinct and separate existence, but refers them to a common principle, which is, according to him, the absolute idea, or God. In this case, objective nature is only the absolute idea going out of itself, so to say, giving itself limits, though it is infinite, and individualising itself; so that the intelligence of all men and external nature are only manifestations of the absolute idea. When we say to the disciples of this system, that it is only the philosophy of identity modified, they exclaim against us; and when we speak of the Pantheism which pervades it, they make a division among themselves. We may, therefore, say that there are three different parties among the warmest partisans of the professor of Berlin. These parties are represented, on one side, by Usteri and Gotschel; in the middle, by Rosenkranz, Daub, and Conradi; and on the other side, by Richter of Magdeburg, Dr. Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Feuerbach.

Whatever we may think of the philosophy of Hegel, it is certain that the collection of his works published since his death by devoted adherents, such as J. Schultze, Gans, Michelet, Marheinecke, and Förster, forms a lasting monument of a gifted mind and profound inquirer into human thoughts, under whatever form they appear in civil life, in history, or in the arts. These works entitle their author to a place among the oracles who will be frequently consulted in philosophical science, but they cannot exculpate Hegel from the charge of having perverted all the ancient Christian opinions which he attempted to restore.\*

I have purposely omitted to speak of Jacobi, who also had an influence on theology, because his philosophy was not derived from that of Kant, though he, like that philosopher, thought that the existence of a God cannot be proved by science, and that something more than intelligence (*der Verstand*) is necessary to aid us in rising to the ideas of liberty and immortality. The ruling faculty with Jacobi was sentiment, and for this reason the transcendent intellect of Fichte despised what he considered to be in Jacobi the mere *language of a charlatan*. But Fichte's profound lucubrations sank into obscurity, even while their author was still living, while the opinions of Jacobi are now held in universal estimation even among the Hegelians, who make them enter into the evolutions of their absolute idea. Jacobi maintained, that if we would arrive at any truth, we must set out from a principle which, though indisputable, cannot at first be demonstrated. This principle is faith, which he afterwards confounds with reason, and this is the cause of so many misunderstandings in the history of Rationalism. As the external world, says Jacobi,

\* For more details, see ch. 22 & 23 of the *Life of Spinoza*.

is revealed to us by means of the senses, so divine things are revealed to man by means of faith or reason. This revelation through faith brings irresistible conviction; it responds to an imperative demand of the soul; the soul acquiesces unhesitatingly. But when mere intelligence addresses it, it hesitates, knowing that the knowledge of the intellect is communicated to it, and it is therefore susceptible of error.\*

Thus the philosophy of Jacobi occupies a middle place between the criticism of Kant and the idealism of Fichte. Jacobi's aim was not, like that of Reinhold, Herbart, and Fries, merely to modify Kant's system, but to re-construct its foundations, and preserve only its noble principles respecting the liberty and the conscience of man.† He did not, it is true, arrange a regular system, but this is rather a circumstance in his favour. We must always distrust one who shows us a complete organisation of the science of ideas. Men may attempt, but God alone could execute, such a work; he who is placed at the summit of the synthesis can explain it according to his conception of it. But a perusal of Jacobi's *Letters to Mendelssohn on the Doctrine of Spinoza*, his *Woldemar*, some of his pamphlets, and, above all, his correspondence, will give a very good idea of his views on religious philosophy which with him is the purest religious feeling without the sacrificial Christ—religious feeling which is not the result of speculation, but which seems to us to be a want of our nature that it is the most essential condition of our existence to satisfy. The ruling idea of the whole system is, that there are truths of faith which cannot be demonstrated—truths which rest on facts of the conscience, of which the conscience alone can judge, and of which it is as firmly convinced as if they had been demonstrated. Jacobi agreed with the philosopher of Königsberg in affirming that pure reason is unable to rise to the knowledge of God, of immortality, and of moral liberty; but he accuses him of admitting these three truths only by an inconsistency in his own principles. While Kant allowed to the understanding only a formal objective or subjective-objective knowledge, Jacobi claimed for it, in relation to the knowledge of finite reality, objectively real truth; so that, while the first wishes in experience to fix things subjectively, the second, on the contrary, lays it down as a principle, that the subjective which recognises can only be fixed objectively, or by things.‡

\* His principal work on religious philosophy is entitled *Von den göttlichen Dingen*, 2nd edit. Leipzig, 1822.

† Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi was born at Düsseldorf, in 1753. He died in 1819, when President of the Munich Academy of Sciences.

‡ For further details respecting Jacobi and Kant, in their connexion with Pantheism, see the *Spinoza*, ch. 18, 19.

Frederic Ancillon, late foreign minister in Prussia, took the same views. We should have preferred to see him confine himself exclusively to philosophy. He, too, shows the point at which experimental knowledge stops, whether in religion or philosophy; he shows that sentiment goes much further than knowledge, and that beyond demonstrative proofs there is natural evidence—beyond analysis, inspiration—beyond words, ideas—beyond ideas, emotions; and that the sentiment of the infinite is a fact of the soul—a primitive fact, without which man would be merely an animal of physical instinct or calculation.\*

\* Besides his *Essais Anciens et nouveaux*, and his *Melanges sur des sujets littéraires et philosophiques*, see particularly his *Essai sur la science et la foi philosophique*. Paris, 1830.

## CHAPTER XIV.

SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY FOUNDED UPON SENTIMENT—EARLY CAREER  
OF SCHLEIERMACHER—HIS DISCOURSES ON RELIGION AD-  
DRESSED TO CULTIVATED MINDS.

THEOLOGIANS did not remain idle spectators of these contests of mind with itself. But modern theologians, unlike the partisans of the philosophical systems anterior to those of Hegel, Schelling, and Jacobi, made theology speculative, and thus subjected it to a complete transformation. Philosophy was no longer either the ally or the enemy of theology, but became united to it, adopted its phraseology, but yet did not cede one of its own pretensions. This transformation has been so complete that we may call modern Rationalism theology absorbed by philosophy. It is true that theologians have not avowed this; they have always appeared to make philosophy support the decisions of their speculative spirit. But in reality those decisions have been dictated by philosophy, which has, in spite of the theologians, domineered over all their new systems. Jacobi and Schelling speak by the mouths of Schleiermacher, Twisten, and Nitzsch; Schelling, through Eschenmayer, Schwarz, Daub, and Steffens; Hegel, through Marheinecke, Conradi, and Strauss; and Daub again, and Fries, through the professors De Wette and Hase. These theologians, each in his own peculiar way, have endeavoured to raise theology to a speculative science, and to prove that philosophy has value only so far as it rises to the height of theology, and becomes identified with it. They have thus preserved in the eyes of philosophy which denies this identity, and yet does not refuse to yield to evidence, several Christian truths which vulgar Rationalism had rejected as being contrary to reason. But we shall soon see that if Christian doctrine has appeared to derive support from speculative theology, it has incurred dangers the more formidable, because less evident than those which it has escaped. Schleiermacher was the first to attempt this task, which requires for its fulfilment intellectual power of no ordinary stamp. This theologian, from his actual importance and from the no less real influence which, by means of his writings, he still exercises on theology, deserves a prominent place in



our history. He was born at Breslau in 1768, and died in 1834. He was thus a witness of those remarkable events which foretold to clear-sighted men the approach of a new era in the history of nations, and warned them to prepare the materials for a new social edifice, if they did not wish to be found unprovided, and to be entangled by the course of events in difficulties whence they could not extricate themselves without great trouble. Schleiermacher, whose versatility of mind would have qualified him for becoming distinguished among those who had the guidance of public affairs, chose what would to most men seem a far more humble part, and applied himself to the regeneration of the religious ideas of his day. He belonged to that class of richly-gifted men who, whatever position they may occupy, cannot fail to distinguish themselves, and it must be confessed that, notwithstanding the moderate terms which he made use of to effect a reconciliation between parties, and that kind of fusion of Rationalism and Supernaturalism the place of which we cannot always perceive, he has given light and life to his native land. If he has inflicted severe wounds on the Christian faith of ancient times, in attempting to cure the maladies of the church, he has at least raised religion from the depths to which it had fallen, and has restored to evangelical Christianity a part of its ancient fame.

Schleiermacher was educated among the Moravian brethren, first at Niesky and afterwards at Barby. From the examples of practical Christianity before him, even more than from the doctrinal instructions that he received, he derived a piety which he never lost, and which often protected him from the sallies of an imagination that perhaps might otherwise have led him very far. We cannot read without emotion what he himself has written respecting this period of his life. "Piety," says he, "was the maternal bosom in the sacred shade of which my youth was passed, and which prepared me for the yet unknown scenes of the world. In piety my spirit breathed before I found my peculiar station in science and the affairs of life; it aided me when I began to examine into the faith of my fathers, and to purify my thoughts and feelings from all alloy; it remained with me when the God and immortality of my childhood disappeared from my doubting sight; it guided me in active life; it enabled me to keep my character duly balanced between my faults and virtues; through its means I have experienced friendship and love."\* If it is true that the impressions of early youth are lasting, it is probable that his somewhat severe education among the Moravians was the cause that Schleiermacher, with his astonishing mental activity, and surrounded as he was by circum-

\* *Ueber die Religion, Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.* 4th Auflage. Berlin.

stances so likely to give a wrong impulse to his mind, did not, instead of beginning a new era in theology, take up and develope with some *éclat* the system of Naturalism, which, in reality, sank into obscurity before him. We have seen that Schleiermacher speaks of mental doubts which caused him, not to deny, but to regard in quite another light, the questions relating to God and immortality; this is equivalent to a confession that doctrine held no important place in his positive belief. It was at this period of trouble and anxiety of mind that he seceded from the Moravian community, and went to complete his studies at the University of Halle, where, in 1802, he was appointed extraordinary professor of philosophy and theology, and preacher of the University. Before that date, however, he had commenced his career at Berlin, where for some time he had held the office of chaplain to the House of Charity. While at Berlin, he wrote some discourses addressed to people of cultivated minds who professed little esteem for religion. These essays excited great interest, and created a reputation for their author. Full of rare eloquence and skilful argument, they forcibly attacked the indifference which at that time wore the garb and bore the name of tolerance, but which did not always conceal its profound contempt for all positive religion. Astonished by so much boldness, and not understanding the unusual forms employed by the young orator, the incredulous asked whether they were seriously attacked thus in their last stronghold of indifference; and, when once convinced of the sincerity and courage of their new opponent, it became their first aim to make him a convert to their own party. Then the most suspicious praises were lavished on him by the dispensers of fame, while ancient orthodoxy, with a narrow-mindedness which it too often shows, hastened to thrust him out from the number of the faithful, forgetting that Christ himself has said that whoever is not against him is for him. In exculpation, however, of these orthodox men, we must say that Schleiermacher laid himself open to religious criticism as much by his definition of the religion which he endeavoured to defend against indifference, as by his toleration of opinions somewhat akin to the philosophy of Spinoza. In fact, in the second of his discourses, after refuting the different ideas of piety formed by his contemporaries, he says that the meditation of the pious man consists only in the immediate knowledge of the finite in the infinite, of the temporal in the eternal. To seek this infinite, and to find it in all that lives and moves, in all which is born and changes, in all action and endurance, to have life and feel it only in this immediate sentiment—this he calls religion. This sentiment alone can give peace; where it exists not, we find only anguish, trouble, and death. Thus piety is a life in the infinite nature of all,

possessing God in all and all in God. These are beautiful ideas, but we can easily understand how they might be misconstrued, especially when found in connexion with passages in which, deploring the unhappy destiny of Spinoza, whom he calls *the rejected saint* (*verstoßenen heiligen Spinoza*), he affirms that that philosopher was full of the universal spirit—that the infinite was with him the beginning and the end, the universe his only and eternal love, and that it was because he was imbued with religion and the holy spirit that he remained alone—raised above the vulgar, but without disciples, without even the rights of citizenship.\*

We may already perceive, from the new forms in which he clothed his religious ideas, that a truly philosophical spirit animated Schleiermacher, and yet we cannot say that he derived his philosophy from Spinoza and Jacobi, of whom he always speaks with esteem, rather than from Schelling, whose æsthetical views and explanations of ancient mythology he approved. Schleiermacher belonged properly to no school, though he applied so successfully to philosophy, and the many parties who have seemed to claim him have only done so because he would reflect glory upon them; but, if he formed no school of philosophy, it was because he wished rather to speak to the souls of his disciples than to construct new systems for their use; he wished rather to infuse into them religious life—to nourish them with piety, which compensates for the want of so many things, and whose place nothing can supply—than to teach them how to maintain ingeniously new mental combinations, and, by imposing on them his ideas with all the authority of his pro-

\* *Reden ueber die Religion*, Fifth Discourse. I repeat that these Discourses, glowing with eloquence and strong in argument, ought to be read only in the fourth edition, in which there are explanatory notes of the passages most open to criticism. It is true that many of these notes explain nothing, because Schleiermacher shared the weakness common to great men, of believing that he had never erred, and of attempting to reconcile this work of his youth with the doctrines of the experienced professor. Is it then so difficult for a Christian heart to perform an act of humility? Thus, he says, with truth, of Spinoza and Novalis, that it had excited surprise to find them joined together in this passage—“When philosophers shall be religious and shall seek God like Spinoza, when poets shall be pious and shall love Christ like Novalis, then will the great resurrection be celebrated in the two worlds.” He adds, in a note, that he venerates these two men equally, because Spinoza was as pious in science as Novalis was in the arts; that, though written with the enthusiasm of youth, he would not alter one word of this eulogium in old age, since there can be no question respecting the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as understood by the church, in Spinoza, and that he does not see why he should not be accused of Catholicism for having praised Novalis, with as much justice as of Pantheism for having spoken justly of its modern restorer.

found learning, to deprive them of the indisputable rights of their free reason. This was a truly noble aim, and, like a true "Priest of the Most High," who despises these partial struggles with irreligion which benefit no one, he attempted to guide men into the most hidden depths of the religious sentiment, to show them there all the living forms under which it has always displayed itself, to prove how humanity necessarily produced these forms, and how they belong to that which we hold most dear and sacred, and to lead his disciples to the summit of the temple, in order to look into the depths of the sanctuary and to discover all its secrets.\*

Then, with arguments full of vigour, he shows the nullity of all mental cultivation which is not founded on this groundwork of piety. It matters little to Schleiermacher whether a man reject or admit the doctrines of a church, because religion has no need of these forms. He wishes to make man reflect on the religious sentiments of which he cannot be deprived. Repudiate the miracles, the revelation, the inspiration of the sacred books; are we children, that we should need such legends (*solche Mährchen*)? yes, reject all hitherto given you to believe; Schleiermacher will soon compel you to adopt other miracles, other revelations, another inspiration. All which has an immediate connexion with the infinite, with the universe; all which is finite in so far as it shows us the infinite,—all this is to him a miracle. What is revelation, if not a primitive communication of the universe to man? what is inspiration, if not the spontaneous sentiment which manifests itself in us? Thus the religion which he announces demands no blind faith, it does not begin by condemning the usages of science and the rights of philosophy; it is quite natural, and in so far as it flows from the universe of which we are a part, it is entirely an effect of grace (*ganz Gnadenwirkung*). We must not be surprised at this use of the word *grace* with respect to the universe, because he takes care to add that his God is his universe; it is the unity of all, of that all which affects our sentiments and gives us spiritually the consciousness of our infinity. If these views surprise you, if your Deism is alarmed by such boldness, (for there is no one like the Deist for maintaining the divine personality and the individual immortality of the human soul,) Schleiermacher will prove to you that you must know how to renounce this learner's science of which you are so proud, and that you will become a complete man only by abandoning to the Eternal your perishable personality. The only immortality promised you by religion is, that in the midst of the finiteness in which you exist you shall become *one with the*

\* *Reden*, p. 8, 9, 13.



*infinite*. With this conviction you will not remain idle, but you will labour for self-renunciation; and when you shall be thus lost in the universality of existence, and when greater and holier desires arise within you, then, and then only, he will speak to you of the hopes given you by death, and of the infinity to which you may aspire.\* Thus Schleiermacher attempted to destroy all the prejudices, well or ill founded, of those who thought themselves too enlightened to honour religion, by showing the distinction already made by other rationalists between religion and its forms, and by abandoning to the destroyers of Christianity the books of theology, the symbolical books, and even the Scriptures, because the spirit of religion endures no slavery; and he only who is free from the chains of the letter and from a blind authority can penetrate into the sanctuary. Having thus conciliated the sympathies of the scoffers and the indifferent in the cultivated classes, he addresses himself to the epicureans and to the friends of the arts; he shows them that the highest enjoyment consists in a devoted attachment to religion and in an entire abandonment of the whole soul to the immediate sentiment of the infinite and the eternal. He points out the celestial and imperishable as the highest aim of our exertions, and fortifying this idea by all the resources supplied by elevated sentiments, he compels cultivated individuals, in whom the religious feelings are not excited, either to renounce their claim to that title, since science without religion is the most deplorable illusion, or to turn and do homage to that benefactress of mankind as to the most blessed of realities. From religion alone can proceed that which is true and divine in the vocation of man which forms the melody of his life; it sounds its sublime concords, and from this union proceeds a powerful and holy harmony which raises him to the plenitude of life. A whole volume would be necessary to develop these ideas of Schleiermacher. They are poured forth like a torrent from his heart, and nevertheless speak to the intellect as much as to the sentiment of man. Nor can we follow him when he enters on the fruitful field of history, or when he penetrates into the depths of the inner man, to make the whole world bear testimony in favour of the religious sentiment, and to lead us by the knowledge of the world to that of humanity, from the knowledge of humanity to man, whom we ought to love as its representative and as much as ourselves, since he, like us, is a central point of the universe which elevates and universalises us.

\* See, besides the development of these ideas in the second and third Discourses, a beautiful Treatise of Dr. Zeller on the personality of God, as conceived by Schleiermacher, in the *Theological Annals*, of which Zeller is the Editor. 1842. Part II. p. 263-288.



But it is not sufficient to respect the religious sentiment; we must also honour it in the positive religious systems, which are all terrestrial forms of religion. When it puts off its infinity it can show itself only under forms more or less pure, according to the state of mental culture. They would be very blind who should condemn ancient Rome for its Paganism, when she was so full of the divinity that she admitted all the gods into her Pantheon; and should praise modern Rome, when, in banishing those gods from her bosom, she has proscribed the religious element. Yes, the positive religions are preferable to the abstract religions of the Epicureans and the Deists, since in them only does the universal spirit develope itself, and in them only are found the characteristic expressions of the religious sentiments of individuals. Hence it follows that none has a right to call himself a religious being, who has not a religion of his own which possesses a firm character and decided features. We do not mean to say that we must set an equal value on all positive religions. We learn to appreciate the spirit of a religion by reflecting on its fundamental idea. Thus we see that Judaism was an advance upon Polytheism, because it appears to us to be a reciprocal intercourse between God and man, a retribution of God by the finite which was itself a work of God, for and upon the finite which was the work of man. But Christianity is superior to it, inasmuch as by it is revealed the general tendency of what is finite towards the unity of the whole as well as from the manner in which it intervenes in the oppositions which arise, either by fixing bounds to them, or by distributing what is necessary of the divine and the human, to restore things to their proper level. So that corruption and purity, enmity and intervention, are the constituent elements of the Christian idea; and this explains the holy sadness with which Christianity treats the sacred and the profane, and gives the key-note to the sublime harmony of the life of Jesus. Because the religion of Jesus alone is capable of raising us to the infinite by the redemption which breaks down all contradictions, it suffers the existence of other religions by its side, in order that we may judge of it by this amiable endurance, and that its light may seem the more brilliant from shining in the midst of darkness.\*

By means of these discourses, sent forth into the midst of an indifferent society, Schleiermacher sowed no unproductive seeds of religious thought. He led many to the porch of the Christian temple which he himself had trouble in entering; but the religious progress which he afterwards made through a better appreciation of evangelical Christianity ought to have enabled him to introduce a great number into the

\* *Reden*, Fifth Discourse.

very interior of the sanctuary of which he had discoursed to his earlier readers.

It seems however that the thwartings which his discourses caused him to undergo deeply afflicted him, for he complains of them in the preface to the third edition. After insisting on the difference of the period at which they were written from that at which he should no longer be reproached for them, he adds, "that his work had become strange even to himself."

These discourses of Schleiermacher, of which the fourth, on religions in general, is not the least important, from the bold propositions which it contains,—these discourses, which seemed to lend weapons to indifference concerning religion, which, however, he opposed so warmly and obstinately, did not fail to produce salutary fruits. They taught some to reflect, and that was a great point gained, while others were induced to seek for something more positive than the vague idealism of Fichte and Schelling, which was beginning to engage certain minds at that period. And then, as usual, in times of re-action, the reasonable medium was lost, and Schleiermacher could say with some warmth, "Why do you ask me for a new impression of my discourses, when the class to which they were addressed seems to exist no longer? for if we make a close examination, here at least (at Berlin), among cultivated people, should we not think it more necessary to compose discourses for pietists, for slaves of the letter, for the superstitious and ignorant, who condemn all uncharitably?"

It has been sometimes said that these discourses sought to restore Christianity in the name of science; but this is a strange mistake. Schleiermacher spoke to cultivated men in language which they could understand; and by sentiment he thought to lead them to a better appreciation of the facts of consciousness, which they could not condemn when once acquainted with them. To those who, relying on their reputation as learned men, made of it a rampart against the Christian faith, he showed the vanity of science when not vivified by religious thoughts. He then presents some phases of religion to make it admired even more than loved, and when he thinks that he has produced a reasonable conviction, to deprive science of every pretext against it, he takes up again the amiable, graceful and poetical side of the question, in order to carry to the heart what he had at first presented only to the mind. Yet valuable as these discourses are, both from their intrinsic merit and the intentions with which they were written, and though in Germany they are generally regarded as brilliantly eloquent, we can look on them only as the work of a writer whose imagination has outstripped his reason, and who seeks to erect a temple to a

God unknown alike by the Christians of his day, and to the philosophers who listened to him. And when we find that Schleiermacher, twenty years later, published a doctrinal system, the principles of which are so much opposed to his discourses, we regret that a man of such genius, in his reluctance to confess his errors, should have made such fruitless efforts to prove that there always existed an unity in his religious opinions, which his friends have much trouble in maintaining. At this same period of intellectual labour, and of doubt concerning positive Christianity, he wrote those *Letters on the Lucinde of Schelling*, which may be regarded as the application of his religious principles to actual life. When we see in religion only a sort of æsthetics, we soon find it in the affections of the soul, and what is more easy than to make *art for art* in respect to the sentiments? Certainly, when one of the most spiritual writers of young Germany thought proper to reprint these famous letters, in the preface to which the writer declares that he would rather be in hell with Schelling than in heaven with Marheinecke, and that the world would have been happier if it had never heard the name of God, he certainly did not do so to show the Christian virtues, and still less the religious belief of the author. Yes, Schleiermacher would have risen in the esteem of the admirers of his fine genius, if he had been more sincere respecting these first productions of a stormy period in his intellectual life, if he had shown less anxiety in the long and numerous notes which accompany the last edition, to veil, like a true *Schleiermacher* (*veil-maker*), a part of his meaning, to confound criticism, which was not always unjust towards him, to join accessories to the first plan, and employ his powerful arguments in restoring parts which had been rejected by superior light. What was the consequence of this? More consistent minds have been prejudiced against his later works, which certainly are worthy of serious consideration, and a great number of others among the young, who have been charmed by his learning, have attempted to blend the past and the present of Schleiermacher, and have made of his opinions a rationalistico-supernaturalistic jumble, which they have dared to present as Christianity restored by science.

When we are recalling this part of Schleiermacher's life, which his friends avoid speaking of, in order to avoid also justifications which justify nothing, we must not forget how lamentable was that period of religion, when, with the exception of some pure disciples of Kant, who still honoured religion as a product of morality, all parties either attacked Christianity with the arms of a shameless Rationalism, or merely placed themselves on the defensive, and contented themselves with some insignificant formulas, which they represented as reasonable

orthodoxy. Schleiermacher, however, was, from the commencement of his literary career, able to take a high position, and gave to theology especially a strong and happy impulse, which will lead to still further results, if it is to be really useful to the Church of Christ.

But if Schleiermacher was only the defender of a somewhat vague though subjectively positive religiousness, he did not hesitate to offer to these same persons of cultivated minds stronger mental nourishment in proportion as his intentions were better understood and his powers increased with his faith. We discover this mental and Christian advancement very clearly in the sermons which, as a preacher, he delivered up to the latest period of his life.\*

This is the most proper place to quote some passages of these sermons, in which the piety of the preacher sometimes contrasts with the boldness of the theological professor. But what difficulty there is in choosing, in volumes which contain from fifty to sixty sermons!

In order to give an idea of the style of the orator, and to show the nature of his Christian faith, when his first impressions of a too æsthetical religion had faded, we will analyse two of the sermons best suited to our purpose. The first is an occasional discourse, delivered March 28th, 1813, in which the preacher displays a degree of patriotism that made him somewhat unjust towards a nation which fulfilled a providential mission in the adventurous marches of its armies through all the countries of Europe. He begins thus: "An extraordinary event interrupts our instructions on the sufferings of the Saviour, and is to furnish the subject of our meditations this day. We have seen the departure from our city, of the army of a nation allied to us only in name, and we experienced none of the emotions ordinarily felt by parting friends. We indulged, on the contrary, in grateful joy, because we were delivered at last from a long and heavy oppression. This army, however, was immediately succeeded by the troops of another nation, which had been nominally our enemy. These we received with the most lively enthusiasm when they declared themselves friends of our king and country. The excitement increased when we witnessed the return of our own warriors and became assured of our deliverance. Then cries of gladness were everywhere heard. Thanks to the Lord for the

\* The third edition (of 1834) is in only four volumes, but it is so compact that it contains the six collections published before the death of the author. Of his posthumous sermons there have been published two volumes explaining the Gospel of Mark, and two explaining the Gospel of John; but these four volumes appear to contain only the ideas of Schleiermacher collected by students and compiled by his editors.



sure signs which he has given to the army through the frightful ravages of the northern war ; thanks to the brave and noble leaders, who, not fearing even to appear disobedient, dared to act according to the true meaning and purpose of the king, and thus took the first decisive step towards breaking the insupportable bonds, which had so long enchained us ; thanks to the king, who, in such favourable circumstances, has acted in a manner agreeable to our intentions. Yes, thanks to this union of circumstances, the transition from slavery to liberty is about to take place. But though our hearts were thus deeply moved, we could not express our feelings publicly, because the king had not yet explained his intentions. The royal word has now been published, and though the journals which have communicated it to us have deeply impressed it on our hearts, you will yet hear it read with joy and emotion.”

The address of the king to the nation here follows, with some sentences pointing out to notice its patriotic spirit. The orator resumes his discourse thus :—“ The passage of our army through this town to the struggle, the decisive struggle, for all that is most high and noble, is the event which, as it certainly occupies and excites all our minds, must engage our thoughts, particularly at this hour, so that this holy war may commence with thanksgiving to heaven, and that our joy and our hope may be consecrated by prayer to God.” Here follows the text, the foregoing part being the preamble, which always precedes it in German sermons,—Jeremiah xvii. 5-8 : “ Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” Jer. xviii. 7-10 : “ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it ; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.” “ Do not imagine that I am going to draw a parallel between my country and the nation against which we are about to enter the field, and that for this purpose I have chosen these significant words of the prophet. No ;



I only wish to remind you of the contrasts which we meet with in our own history, in order to show you what reality there is in the revolution which causes our rejoicing, and to teach you that the smiling pictures which we love to draw of our temporal future are only the accessaries which ought to occupy our thoughts. Let us consider the changes that have just taken place only in their relation to our morality, and to our position before God. Let us meditate—1st, on the contents of the text, and their application to our moral dignity; and 2nd, we shall see that such an application of the text is a motive for responding to the appeal of our monarch.”\*

The discourse is glowing with patriotism, but the reproaches of the corruption, infidelity, baseness and disloyalty of his fellow-citizens are not less warm, and we refrain from quoting them, not only because our space forbids us, but also because we would gladly see a skilful translator render into our own language a part of the sermons contained in the collection of Schleiermacher.

Having given an example of his patriotic oratory, we will quote some passages in which he attempts to re-build the Christian faith, and treats of a subject which is the touchstone of theologians. The text is Peter's answer to Christ's question, “But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” (Matt. xvi. 15, 16.) In a somewhat brief exordium he says, that if it is natural to commence the new ecclesiastical year by a preparation for the joyful feast of Christ's advent upon earth, it is equally natural that the hope of a rich benediction which should accompany the celebration of Christmas, should cause us to fix more particularly our attentions on the author and finisher of our faith. Since the text is an answer to the question, what is the true faith in the Saviour on which depends the fulfilment of his promises, we must prove that this answer contains the true Christian belief, 1st, because it is a faith which flesh and blood have not revealed, but our Father who is in heaven; 2nd, because it is the only faith on which the Lord can build his church, so that in it and by it all will remain bound or loose in heaven.

Here we only analyse. Some of the disciples had answered that here Jesus was taken for John the Baptist, restored to life; there for Elias, the old prophet, once more visiting the earth. These answers remind us of the different ways in which men regard the person of Christ. For among Christians we not rarely meet with some who con-

\* Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Predigten*, p. 37-40 of the 4th volume. Edition of Berlin, 1835.

sider Jesus only a severe but just judge of all human greatness, as was John; others who think him like Jeremiah, who continually raised a complaining voice against the sins of his nation, and found consolation only in his intercourse with God; and others again who regard him as one of the ancient prophets returned to the earth, at a time when the spirit of prophecy was reviving in Israel, and was again making heard, by the mouth of Jesus, the powerful voice of the Deity. But the Saviour does not speak the words of salvation in favour of those who think thus of him, for flesh and blood, that is to say, man's unaided reflection, can produce these opinions. Jesus calls Peter blessed, because instead of having had his faith revealed to him by flesh and blood, he had received it from his Heavenly Father. At a period of general national confusion, no express revelation from God is necessary to teach us that this state of affairs is the result of forgetfulness of divine things, and we rejoice when men appear who can uproot the evil. We may call them messengers of God, and yet not attain salvation by this faith. We may rejoice at the appearance of a courageous Elias, who denounces the baseness of courts, who speaks with energy to those before whom all others are silent, and humiliates, by the power of his representations, those before whom all ought to bow; who, when asked, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" will answer, "No, but thou, and thy father's house." (1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.)

Many among the Jews may have thought Jesus such a man, and yet exclaimed, Crucify him. Such a faith may be purely human in its origin. It is not the faith confessed by Peter when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

From the earliest ages of Christianity down to the present day, there have been disputes concerning the manner in which the human and divine were united in Jesus. But remark, that Jesus does not ask Peter, In what sense dost thou understand me to be the Son of God? in what sense is the human and divine united in me? Such a question he thought unnecessary; he refrained from putting it, in order to teach us not to condemn pitilessly the different explanations which may be given of Peter's answer. We ourselves do not undertake to define the nature of this union, in order to form a complete idea of Christ, but we must discriminate between Peter's confession of faith and the opinions respecting the Saviour given before that of the apostle. When Peter affirmed that Jesus was the Christ, every one understood that he was not merely sent, as was John the Baptist, to announce the approach of the kingdom of God, but he came to found it himself, in his own name; that he was not sent, like Elias and the other prophets, to recal the attention of his contemporaries to the forgotten law, and to punish them for

their transgressions, but he came to substitute for an imperfect institution one more nearly perfect, and to judge the whole world, according to what, by his intervention, God will reveal to the world, to reconcile it to heaven. He was not only one who, in days of grief and mourning, came to promise a better future, nor merely the flower of the nation from the virtues which distinguished him; he was the strong and vigorous tree of humanity pointed out by all prophecy, and which will be found in all prophecies of the future; from him proceeds all inspiration, and in him are found spiritual consolations in such abundance, that we may for ever draw from them, as from the plenitude of all gifts. As to the second part of the answer, viz., that Jesus was not only the Messiah, but also the *Son of the living God*, Jesus himself has, in another place, declared that if the great ones of the earth were sometimes called sons of God, he might, with much greater reason, be so designated, since the word of God, which prophets addressed equally to kings and subjects, was incarnate in him, so that while all his actions derived life from God, and all his words were divine truths, yet this incarnation of the word did not prevent him from being our brother, our companion, in all the weaknesses of humanity, excepting sin.

This, then, was the faith confessed by Peter, and such a faith the Heavenly Father alone could reveal to him. It was not an act of flesh and blood to foreknow and hope for such a son of God living among men, or to admit the idea of such a being, when presented to us. This faith, according to the preacher, is the basis of Christianity. "Yes," says Schleiermacher (we here translate his words), "if we consider the person of our Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the living God, we shall confess that this faith could not arise at the time of our Lord's appearance any more than now, when flesh and blood are the only agents employed to lead us to faith. For men, who still exist in the atmosphere of material life, engaged in occupations of an entirely terrestrial nature, look only at the external advantages which alone gain their respect and obedience. In Jesus, there is no external splendour, no magnificence, no glory nor honours, but disgrace and insults, contempt under every form. If a man of a more cultivated mind contemplates the Son of God, he pictures him devoted to the intellectual labours which, by a certain class, are placed among the first of our advantages. But in Jesus we find nothing indicative of a great superiority in what are called the arts and sciences; in place of art he has a love of God in all its purity; his only science is that of the way to life, and the divine laws which are our guide. If we look in him for some of those gifts which strike and dazzle us, we find but one, that of truth. And there-

fore has faith in Jesus, as the Son of God, been always considered a folly by human wisdom, when unenlightened by God himself. Hence it follows that in order to recognise Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God we must first deny the world, must feel that for the salvation of the soul we need something more than mere worldly ambition can give, and that all human wisdom is full of vanity, if it does not recognise communion with God and obedience to His will, as the only things of real value. The mind which feels these sentiments as an ardent desire which it cannot itself satisfy, this mind then begins to be attracted by the Father to the Son, and when it yields to this attraction by acknowledging that indeed Jesus deserves that we should come to him, it exclaims with Peter, Lord, thou hast the words of life eternal, thou art the Son of the living God." \*

It would seem, at first, that the preacher disagrees with the professor at war with the spirit of his age; but though these sermons are the productions of strong conviction, of a mind impressed with a high idea of its vocation in offering the aliment of truth to the immortal souls which demand it, yet in respect to doctrine we can see in them traces of that medium system proposed by Schleiermacher in his *Dogmatik*, and which his adversaries have qualified as revived Sabellianism.

Neither in philosophy nor theology has Schleiermacher founded a school, because it was his aim, and it does honour to the nobleness of his character, to give an impulse rather than to proscribe, to extend and liberate rather than to concentrate and restrain in the chains of a school which always assumes more or less the aspect of a coterie. He had too high an idea of science to confine it to the narrow proportions of an academical dispute, and too high an idea of humanity to restrain it within the limits of a party or a sect.† Yet, though these were his views, all his works show that he was a man attentive to the progress of science. Though he founds all his doctrines on sentiment, and confesses his predilection for the philosophy of Jacobi, we see that he maintained his own independence, and refrained from imposing on any one the opinions which he preferred. If in his controversy respecting the Theses of Harms, and in his opposition to the Liturgy which the King

\* Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Predigten*, p. 87-95 of the 4th volume. Edition of Berlin, 1835.

† Ritter, the celebrated historian of philosophy, has thus spoken of this subject: "Hegel wished to found a school, in order to extend, by its means, his sphere of activity. Schleiermacher repudiated such an idea, because he wished others to enjoy as well as himself, the liberty of science. Thus Schleiermacher's disciples labour more for the future than those of Hegel."—(*Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen*, March 24, 1842.)



of Prussia wished to impose—an affair in which he gained the independent suffrages of all parties,—if in these disputes he indulged in some haughty and contemptuous expressions, we must attribute it to that involuntary annoyance felt by every great man who finds himself stopped in his progress by the idle and indifferent, whom he would crush in passing only in order to reach the goal sooner, and not from forgetfulness of the principles of liberty so often proclaimed by himself. We must, however, repeat, that by the sagacity of his criticism he has prepared the way for a reform in ethics, the mere exposition of which has already excited a lively interest.\* Through the medium of his disciples at Berlin and Halle, we owe to him that school of speculative theology whose organ is the *Review* of Ulmann and Umbreit. The editors of this periodical are the distinguished writers Lücke, Gieseler, Nitzsch, Schweitzer, and others, who are all proud of their connexion with the great man who cultivated with equal success the unfruitful fields of philology and an unknown theology. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of here quoting some beautiful sentences addressed to his young friends at the end of one of his discourses:—"You, my friends, who honour what is beautiful and good, remember that you are invested with a priesthood. Each of you treats as the object of study and of art the representation of the spiritual life, and the Deity, from His rich and infinite stores, has given to each a peculiar destiny. To the general sentiment for all belonging to the sacred domain of religion, each of you unites the desire of becoming perfect in one particular branch. There reigns among you a noble emulation, and the wish to be able to present something worthy of such an assembly, so that each receives with zeal and fidelity what belongs to his individual destiny. Preserve it in a pure heart, arrange it in a reflecting mind; a heavenly art will make it

\* One of his most devoted disciples, Schweitzer, professor at Zurich, has published, in fact, what he calls the *Morality of Schleiermacher* (*Entwurf eines Systems der Sittenlehre aus Schleiermacher's handschriftl. Nachlasse*. Berlin, 1835). In 1841, Dr. Twesten also, his worthy successor in the chair of Berlin, published *The Principles of Schleiermacher's Philosophical Ethics*, also from the posthumous manuscripts of the author (*Fried. Schleierm. Grundriss der philos. Ethik, mit einleitender Vorrede*, von Dr. A. Twesten). But if there is any difference between the two works, it is only in form, since all agree that Schleiermacher merely wrote down ideas which his friends or disciples afterwards arranged or developed. They were scattered, and somewhat confused, elements on which the great man who tried all subjects (his æsthetical lectures are now being published from his manuscript notes) hoped to work some time if God had prolonged his existence. These two works, of which Twesten's is perhaps the best introduction to the subject, must be read in order to learn the connexion between all the ideas of Schleiermacher, to understand better the direction of his labours, which, in fact, appeared all to relate to Ethics.



perfect, and thus from all sides and in all tones will arise a hymn of gratitude and glory to the Infinite. Yes; let each of you offer, from a heart full of joy, the ripened fruits of his reflections and his contemplations. You are a band of friends. Each of you knows that he is a part, a work of the universe, and that in him are manifested the divine life and action: let him regard himself, then, as the worthy object of the attention of the others; let him freely, though with a holy fear, disclose to their observation what he finds in himself in his relation to the universe and his individual element of humanity. Why should you conceal yourselves from each other? All that is human is sacred, for all is divine. You are a band of brothers; what better expression can you find for this entire union of your nature, not as regards being and action, but in sentiment and comprehension? The nearer each one of you approaches to the universal, the more does he communicate himself to the others, and the more completely do you become one. You are no longer merely men—you are humanity; and in issuing forth from yourselves, you enter on the road to true immortality.” \*

• *Rede 3rd*, p. 212.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SCHLEIERMACHER'S DOCTRINAL SYSTEM—DIGRESSION RESPECTING HIS EXEGETICAL OPINIONS—HIS INFLUENCE ON THE PREVAILING THEOLOGY.

SCHLEIERMACHER'S instructions in the University were as gradual in their advancement as his preaching in the temple. Whether this arose from a premeditated determination not to expose his teachings respecting positive Christian faith to the ignorant contradictions which he foresaw, or whether he waited patiently for the accomplishment of his mental labours, which should change him from a man pious after the manner of the most truly pious sages to a Christian with firm convictions, it is impossible to say. It is certain, however, that it was not until 1821 that he thought himself sufficiently acquainted with the ground on which he stood, to teach as a doctor what he had already taught as a preacher, as we have shown by an extract from a sermon delivered a few years before the appearance of his doctrinal system. It is an indisputable fact, that the name of Schleiermacher is in the present day more venerated than that of any other theologian, and no cultivated person can fail to wish to search into the deep meaning of his Christian doctrines. We have already seen that Schleiermacher thought that neither religion nor piety, in his sense of the words, was an affair of the intellect, but rather of the sentiment. A man who felt conscious of possessing this holy religion in the depths of his soul, as the most sacred nurture of his life, before all scientific speculation, could not, as Lücke justly says,\* consider it either as a production or a complement of science. He assigned, therefore, and in a manner somewhat too exclusive, sentiment as its principal seat, and declared it to be the source of spiritual life; but as he endeavoured to arrive at the conviction that true religion is to be found only in the Christian church, he began by proving that all truly religious sentiment exists only in an internally religious society. This will account for those discourses which have furnished all kinds of accu-

\* In an article written in honour of the memory of his friend and master. See the review, *Studien und Kritiken*. 1834.

sations against Schleiermacher, from that of Indifferentism to that of Spinozism. In 1821, after twenty years of discussion, inquiry, criticism, and doubtless also of great mental perplexity, he determined at last to publish his final opinions respecting the Christian faith, and thus attempted to build up, after having, as we shall soon see, done much to destroy by his exegetical essays.\* Lücke, somewhat blinded by friendly partiality, compares the importance of this work to that of Calvin's *Institutes*, forgetting that the strength of argument, which is its principal merit, is a poor substitute for that harmony in detail which in the *Institutes* strikes the least practised eye, and shows the firm and indestructible convictions of the author. But, as Twisten says justly, though somewhat too decidedly, in referring doctrine to the fact of the Christian conscience as its foundation and true object, Schleiermacher has preserved faith from the excursive attacks of science, and has at the same time restored consistency to doctrine.†

Though Schleiermacher's cast of mind caused him to regard questions from an elevated position, and his strong individuality made him speak of them like a master, we cannot avoid considering his Christian doctrine as a powerful effort for conciliation, and therefore wanting the characteristics necessary to preserve it from the attacks of argument. Though a work written for the purpose of conciliation and explanation does honour to the intentions of the author, it must necessarily lead him into half decisions, which give a certain degree of weakness to his writing, and rob it of some portion of its value.

Sentiment, said he, is the source of all moral greatness, of all human dignity; why should it not also be the source of religion or of piety? Thus he connects his doctrine with his lectures and his sermons, so as to show that there has always been a unity in his philosophical and religious views. But his idea of basing religion on sentiment has no novelty, since mystics of all ages have advanced similar opinions, and their subsequent aberrations cannot invalidate their principles any more than the errors of the human mind can cause it to be deprived of its rights. Yet Schleiermacher, whose mind the philosophy of Jacobi had turned to the truth of experience, that the intellect is obliged to admit principles which it cannot demonstrate, and which nature compels it to admit under pain of favouring the cause of the most desperate scorp-

\* This work is entitled *Darstellung des christlichen Glaubens nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*. 2 vols. Berlin, 2nd edit. 1830-31. This edition has undergone many alterations, but they have been made rather in the expressions than the substance.

† *Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik*, vol. i. p. 255, 2nd edit.

ticism—Schleiermacher defines much better the principles of the religious sentiment, and with infinite art connects them with his doctrinal system, whose aim could only be the exposition of the religious sentiment in itself, and of the obstacles which it meets with in its manifestation or development, and of the manner in which the Gospel re-establishes it in the plenitude of its perfection. The author imposed on himself another task also, as the title of his book implies. This was to show a double character in the doctrines of the Evangelical church—that is, the Christian church, formed by the union between the Lutherans and the Reformed party: for in the doctrines which it offers to the belief of its members we find the truth of the primitive evangelical doctrine and their perfect agreement with the general truths of religion.

Thus religion consists in the sentiment which makes us feel our absolute dependence on God; but in this sentiment of dependence in a finite being there always presents itself the possibility of an opposition and a re-action; hence the empire of sin in the soul, as well as the empire of grace. It follows that Christian doctrine may be reduced to two points—the development of the feeling of our dependence on God, independently of the disorder created by sin, and the development of the same dependence regarded under the law of sin and of grace. This inward feeling of dependence is not something accidental or accessary; it is one of the essential elements of life, so that all irreligion and impiety are only means of self-deception and false illusions. Thus we see that the sentiment of piety, the constituent element of our life, can take the place of all the proofs of the existence of God deduced *à priori*, for it gives us an immediate knowledge of the Divinity, and all other certainty rests necessarily on this first certainty. Granting that these *à priori* proofs of the existence of God are possible, still they do not belong to doctrine, whose task ought to be, not to confound incredulity in order to lead it back to religion, but only to develop what is already admitted, namely, the religious sentiment, the perception of which is avowed, and which supposes the immediate certainty of the existence of God. Thus far for the religious man in general; but the Christian is in the same relation of sentiment to Christ as he is with God as a human being; and these two sentiments are confounded in him, and by their union realise the evangelical faith which is the nurture of his soul. But as our union with God depends on the harmony which exists between the soul and the generality of beings, it is necessary to treat the question of this universal harmony of the world in its relations to God; and from this arises another question—that of the creation and providential preservation of the world.

The mode in which the confessions of faith respecting the origin of

the world are made, is very simple, because it is the pure expression of the general sentiment of the dependence of man on God. But the question, properly so-called, of the creation, belongs rather to philosophy than to doctrine, and we cannot regard as strictly historical (*streng historisch*) what the Bible says on the subject. As for the question of the act of creation being performed, not by the absolute being God, but by Christ, the second person in the Trinity, this question depends on the manner in which we understand the divinity of the Saviour, a point on which we shall speak hereafter; nor could Christ, in any case, be considered the Creator, except in the sense that he perfected the creation by his redemption. The expression *create out of nothing* entirely precludes all idea of matter pre-existing and independent of the Divine agency, but does not contradict the idea of form to be given by God. God is thus placed between form and matter, by which, nevertheless, the primitive sentiment of dependence is not represented in its purity. It is better, therefore, to keep the expression *ex nihilo*, which implies this dependence much more fully. But did this creation take place in consequence of a free determination of God or by a necessity of his nature? As soon as it can be well taught in the church, whether time existed or did not exist before the creation, seeing that the question in no way affects the sentiment of our dependence on God, then the creation may be considered merely as an act of the divine will, without attempting to place the Deity between the two opposite ideas of liberty and necessity. What grounds are there for His liberty, since God, before the creation, has nothing to determine or to hinder Him? As little right has any one to say God *ought to have* created, since with equal reason we might say God *ought not to have* created, or God ought to have created something else. The more reasonable opinion is, that by the creation God revealed His being, and that His wisdom and goodness are so stamped upon the creation, that from all eternity it ought to appear thus, and that therefore nothing ought to have happened which has not happened.\*

The question of the creation has in all times suggested another relative to beings of a nature different from that of man. The Jews, who had no astronomical knowledge, were satisfied on this point when told of a hierarchy of angels inhabiting other regions of this vast universe, remote from the globe on which we live. But since we people in imagination the suns which shine in the firmament with intelligent beings, the question of angels is superfluous. The symbolical books seem not to have doubted the existence of these pure spirits; but if we ob-

\* Vol. i. § 48, 49, 59.



serve closely we shall be convinced that this reality has no grounds save in the imagination of the writers. Therefore it is more consistent with reason not to speak of the influence of angels over us, and to say that the primitive world needed these beings only to explain man's connexion with nature.\* The notion contained in Scripture, and also in the symbolical books, of those angels who had revolted against God, and united the greatest wickedness to the highest degree of intelligence, though in a finite manner,—this notion is self-contradictory, since it implies the existence of a being who, though subject to God, is equal to Him in power. And as in Holy Scripture, Satan and his angels are mentioned only in parables, or in certain popular addresses, and never in didactic instructions, we should treat this doctrine of demons as we do that of angels; that is to say, we should speak of it only negatively, for all the influence of bad angels has vanished since the establishment of the church, and the admission of them can only disturb the peace of the mind which has reposed with confidence in the kingdom of God. Let poetry still preserve the character of Satan, but the Liturgy cannot be permitted this licence.†

There follow two treatises; one on the preservation of the world (*von der Erhaltung*), which Schleiermacher substitutes for the *ancient* and biblical idea of providence, the other on the attributes of God. They partake more of the somewhat pantheistical influence of the discourses on religion than the other parts of the work, and we should be tempted to attribute to his conciliatory intentions the uncertainty of his decisions, if the posthumous appearance of the dialectics had not shown us, that in him the philosopher prevailed over the historian, and that eternity conceived in unity was the only God which his sentiment, and, perhaps unconsciously, his intellect still more than his sentiment, led him to admit. Then there is no special chapter on the divine personality, a question which it would have been the more proper for him to treat, as in his discourses he may be accused of having confounded the *life* of God with His personality, and with not having sufficiently distinguished it from moving and animated nature.‡

\* § 51, 52, 53, 54.

† § 55, 56, 57, 58. As Schleiermacher comprehends in poetry the canticles in use in worship, it follows that in the same religious assembly should be used a liturgy denying the existence of the wicked angels, and a collection of canticles confessing it.

‡ “ . . . einen grossen Unterschied machen sollte zwischen einem persönlichen Gott und einem lebendigen. Das letztere allein ist eigentlich der vom Pantheismus und von der atheistischen blinden Nothwendigkeit scheidende Begriff.”—(*Reden über die Religion*, Rede ii. p. 138.)

The appearance of Christ on the earth is connected with preceding ages by one thing only, and that is sin. Therefore, says Schleiermacher, if you wish to have in the church a Christology, which is favourable to the cause of Christianity, by exalting the moral power peculiar to it, renounce the Old Testament, which cannot teach you anything respecting Christ. This, however, is in direct opposition to Scripture; for without being blindly subservient, an unprejudiced reader of the New Testament must feel that Christ himself, as well as the historians of his life and doctrine, was convinced that in him were accomplished all the predictions of the Old Testament respecting the Redeemer of the World, and that thus the Old Testament is a type of the New. Schleiermacher, however, had firm faith in Christ as the Redeemer of men, and we should say that he renounced the Old Testament only to free himself from difficulties.

But redemption supposes the existence of sin. We feel that sin exists in us when visible things prevent us from arriving at a purer life, and this takes place if in our own consciousness we feel an unwillingness to unite with the divine consciousness. This opposition the Scriptures term the opposition of the flesh to the spirit.

Sin is original or actual. Schleiermacher defines the first as a disposition which has been communicated to us, which we have from the fact of our existence, and which is not, however, free from culpability, while actual sin is every separate and individual manifestation of this disposition. It is an erroneous notion, that a primitive justness has always been the lot of humanity, because the fall can be explained only by the existence of a previous propensity, and consequently all which the symbolical books say of sin can be considered only as the consequences of sin. A sin can be conceived possible only by supposing that it has been preceded by another sin. If this be the case, redemption is a consequence, or rather a necessary result, of the creation, for it consists only in the earnest desire to see ourselves stripped of all which is opposed to our perfect communion with God.\*

This perfect union has never existed, and will never exist, on earth, save in Christ, and for this reason he is the only Son of God, inasmuch as he personified in the highest degree the divine consciousness, and in all the circumstances of his life his divine always completely vanquished his sensuous nature. Hence it is said in Scripture, that in Jesus God became man, and yet we have no right to give him the exclusive name of God, nor to designate him as a mere man, for he was such as man ought to be, and not such as he is. Redemption then is this, that in

\* Vol. xi. p. 84 96.

the faith of the Christian, the essential sinlessness of Christ exists as a thing which we can appropriate to ourselves, and that as members of a church which Christ founded, and which is imbued with his spirit, we renounce by this association our personality and our sensible individuality. Now as the Saviour was God manifested in the flesh, only in so far as he was Christ only, and as at no period of his life the human nature gained the ascendancy in his actions, so are we redeemed when we renounce our proper individuality, and model our life on that of our Saviour. This transformation of the human being, Schleiermacher terms the new birth which every believer in Jesus experiences. Hence we may say that if the development of human life is only the personality of God in progress of establishment, the development of the individual life of Christians is only participation in the divine personality of Christ.\*

After speaking of this redemption from sin effected by Jesus, in his threefold character, as a prophet by his instructions, as a high priest by his complete and painful obedience, and finally by his truly regal function, inasmuch as that nothing is done in his church save by his order, and that all in it proceeds from his spirit,—after this most important part of doctrine, in which he displays the most profound knowledge of the subject, Schleiermacher passes to the question of the church, which, according to him, is the depository of that spirit of Christ with which every believer must be imbued if he wish to have a part in life.

The church could come into existence only after Jesus had disappeared from the earth, nor could the Holy Spirit exist until after that event: for the church is only the society which possesses the sentiment of the Divine, and the spirit of Christ which gives birth to that sentiment in its members is no other than the Holy Spirit. If then the church possess, as a basis of its faith, books which claim themselves and for which it claims the title of inspired, we must by this inspiration understand the operation of the general spirit of the church in the will of an individual in order to the production of a decided work. When speaking of the Holy Spirit, we naturally ask what we are to think of the Trinity. The light in which Schleiermacher regards the divine essence precludes the idea of Deity in three persons; and we must confess that in his doctrine he retains merely in name what the symbolical books consecrated respecting this subject. We may, however, comfort ourselves with the thought that in this matter the symbolical books are directly opposed to the books of whose pure and simple doctrine they claim to be a reflection.† If we wish to retain the name

\* § 113-134.

† § 135-150.

of the Trinity, we may do so by considering the second person as the *being* of God in Christ, and the third person as the spirit which vivifies the Christian church, and represents the union of the divine with human nature.\* Thus we see that among heretics, those most decidedly opposed to the true faith are the Nazarenes, the Manichæans, and the Pelagians, who reject or greatly invalidate the idea of this divine life in man; a life foreign to man, and which he ought nevertheless to appropriate to himself because in it only consists his dignity.

Such, in substance, are the doctrines of the greatest theologian of our age. They are remarkable for the Christian spirit in which they are conceived, but still more remarkable for the devastation which they have made in the domain of the ancient faith. His disciples remark that this spirit of destruction does not exercise itself on the essential doctrines of Christianity which are shown by Schleiermacher to be in harmony with the moral wants of the human soul, that soul which in fact feels its culpability, and burns with the desire to amend in the eyes of God. It rather attacks principles so connected with Christianity that without them we could not understand it. By these we mean the personality of God and a decided faith in the immortality of every human soul. This personality Schleiermacher disavows, as he also disavows a real immortality, because, according to him, it can be considered by the believer only as a participation in the immortality of Christ, that closely resembles the life in God promised us by the Pantheists, and with which the religious sentiment is not satisfied.

From all this we might easily conclude that Schleiermacher's Christian feelings had led him to invent a doctrinal system of his own, in which the evangelical elements are employed only when they do not come into collision with his own ideas.† It would be superfluous after this to ask whether his speculative theology is rationalistic or supernaturalistic in its nature, since it is evidently *à priori* that Schleiermacher has conceived his doctrines and has taken at will from the sacred books whatever may be a cement to strengthen his work. The speculative theology which we conceive of ought to spring from Scripture and not itself explain it; and it must appear when a true philosophy of Christianity shall have established all its elements. If not, Christianity cannot expect an eternal duration.

\* § 186-190.

† Strauss justly says, that this miraculous appearance of Christ, in the Schleiermacherian sense, is either inexplicable in itself, and consequently lies open to every attack of philosophy, or does not explain all the miraculous accompaniments assigned to it by the orthodox doctrine.—(*Life of Jesus*, end of the second volume.)

I cannot conclude this article on Schleiermacher without some words on the tendency of his opinions on exegesis, a subject in which he might have had great influence if he had ever given his attention to it.

His friends have said that his great knowledge of the Hellenic tongue, to which we owe his eloquent translation of Plato, having prevented him from profound study in the strictly Oriental languages, he did not dare, from a sort of modesty known only to the truly wise, to enter on a field where, if he had wished to exert an influence, he must have taken the first place. This did not, however, prevent him from showing what he thought of the tendency of the disputes of his day. He had written in a somewhat accommodating spirit, "that the writings of the Old Testament ought to hold a place in our Bible, partly as testimony to which the New appeals, and partly as forming an historical link between Christian divine service and the synagogue, but that they ought not to share the moral dignity of the books of the New Testament."\* But he was more frank when no longer compelled by the nature of his work to be conciliatory; and he has shown, clearly enough, how little consideration is due to these external supports on which supernaturalists placed their doctrines.†

It would seem, however, from some essays, that exegesis was far from being disagreeable to Schleiermacher's tastes. We must explain his subsequent avoidance of questions relative to it, not by the feeling of his weakness, especially in the exegesis of the New Testament, but probably by another feeling more congenial with his character, viz., that it was much better to pass over in silence questions beneath the knowledge of the age, and to endeavour, by other means, to rebuild the ruined edifice. That such was the opinion of Schleiermacher, we can hardly doubt, when we see him commence his exegetical essays, not as did Bretschneider, at a later period, by *Probabilia*, but by striking out of the canon, without any preamble whatever, Paul's first Epistle to Timothy.‡ Lücke himself observes that, after the first impression produced by Schleiermacher's arguments has faded, we cannot help seeing the weakness of certain proofs, the rashness of some conjectures, and, in general, the absence of proper criticism.§

Schleiermacher, however, defeated on this point by a host of oppo-

\* *Dogmatik*, vol. ii. p. 3.

† Baumgarten deplotes that so great a genius could not comprehend the whole of the apostolic faith, and consequently did not find in the Old Testament the Word made flesh.—(*Theolog. Commentar zum alten Testam. Einleitung.*)

‡ Schleiermacher, *Ueber den sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheum. Ein krit. Sendschreiben*. Berlin, 1807.

§ *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, Part IV. 1834.



nents, wished to take his revenge in exegesis, and he now ventured on a bolder attempt. In the hopes of recalling the distracted attention of his contemporaries to the subject of the formation of the Gospels, he brought forward and maintained a theory that Luke's Gospel is the only one unexposed to the attacks of criticism. But he proposed a most strange hypothesis respecting this Gospel. It had, he maintained, been composed by four different persons, of whom one wrote the miraculous part, another recorded the discourses of our Lord, a third the events relating to his death, while the fourth, probably Luke himself, collected the scattered fragments, which, says Schleiermacher, are written in a style which betrays the work of different authors, and to which Luke only supplied, so to say, the prologue and conclusion.\* It must be understood, however, that in this Gospel, so eminently historical, Schleiermacher makes the most of the circumstances which might prevent the author, whoever he was, from being very accurate in the things which he relates. It is enough to say that an arbitrary principle prevailed in this critical essay, as well as in so many others which have had equal renown.

But, I repeat, such efforts were not calculated to draw the disputation between historical Christianity and Rationalism from the obscurity into which the latter had thrown it.

If it was the intention of the author to restore, by means of a didactic work, Christian opinions, or what he believed to be such, he ventured too far on the slippery ground of criticism; he did not go far enough if he wished to raise a standard round which the members of the new school might rally. Those who have made themselves acquainted with the character of this great writer will prefer the supposition that his wish was to prevent all future dispute respecting books which could only be an obstacle in the onward path, since it is quite possible to be a disciple of Jesus and defend the truth of his religion without having to descant upon difficulties which arrest the progress of doctrine, and for the sake of which we run the risk of compromising our intellectual capacities in the eyes of scientific men. We are supported in this supposition by two letters addressed by Schleiermacher to his friend Lücke, in which we learn his opinions still more from what he leaves unsaid than from what he actually does say clearly. He declares that, seeing the immense progress made by the natural sciences within a certain period, he entertains the most lively fears respecting the fate not

\* *Die Schriften des Lucas, ein kritischer Versuch.* Berlin, 1817. See also an answer by Planck, *Observationes quædam de Lucæ Evangelii analys. critica a Schleiermacher proposita.* Göttingen, 1819.

merely of theology, but even of Christianity itself. "For," says he, "with the means which we now use, it will henceforth be impossible to fortify ourselves against the advances of science, unless we consent to be ceremoniously interred." Then he adds, with noble pride, "I have no desire for such obsequies, and since the field of history still lies open to us, there we must defend ourselves. How much, nevertheless, must be abandoned to the enemy! Not only must we give up the work of six days, but even the very idea of the creation, notwithstanding the sometimes undecided modifications made in it by exegesis. And do we not see that the miracles of the Old and New Testaments fall before the knowledge of our day? Either the history to which they belong must be considered fabulous, or we must regard the miracles as facts having an analogy in nature. There is no medium: what part must we take; and, in either case, what becomes of the ancient faith in miracles? If you take refuge in science, you are free to do so; but in that case, on one side will be Christianity and barbarism, on the other science and incredulity. Some may wish and intend to shut themselves up within their narrow religious fortifications; but neither you, nor I, nor many of our friends, desire to occupy such a position; but are we sure that history itself will lend us a defence when we are yet ignorant as to the fate of the whole of the Old Testament? The brave Stäudlin, and Sack himself, are doing with the Messianic prophecies all that can be done to extricate themselves honourably from such a false position, but it is to be feared that their labours will soon terminate.\* It would be most important to declare from this time, in the most positive manner, that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ depends in no way on belief in the Old Testament, for the longer we should cling to that belief instead of profoundly studying the New Testament, the wider becomes the separation between science and piety. We know not what light criticism may throw even upon the canon of the New Testament.

"Will it not perchance be necessary to admit the suppositions of Dr. Schulz respecting the Gospel of Matthew, and to re-consider the doubts long since entertained as to several of the epistles?† And what can

\* The opinions of Sack on these subjects are to be found principally in his *Christian Apology*, the second edition of which appeared at Hamburg, in 1841. See pp. 259-336.

† The Dr. Schulz to whom Schleiermacher here alludes is that veteran of empirical Rationalism of whom we have spoken, and his hypothesis respecting the Gospel of Matthew is, that it is not an apostolical work in the true meaning of the term; but that it was drawn up and translated into Greek by some one unknown. This had been already brought forward by Eichhorn. David Schulz, *Bemerkungen über den Verfasser des Evangeliums nach Mathaus*. Leipzig, 1824.

be said respecting the inspiration of the sacred books, when we do not rightly know which books are entitled to the name of sacred? No, we should act prudently in renouncing in time all that evidently does not belong to the essence of Christianity, in order that we may not expend our power in a useless struggle where many would lose even the hope of preserving the essential."\*

These are certainly very bold words, and coming, as they do, from a person of great penetration in all subjects, they must give pain to those who set a value on the traditional faith of the Christian church. They cannot fail to ask whether Schleiermacher had penetrated into all the depths of science, and if he really saw what he imagined he saw there. Do not the heads even of the greatest men become giddy when they approach too near the edge of a precipice? And when, fifteen years after the period when this cry of distress was uttered, we are called on to compare these fears with the actual results, shall we not have to relate facts which contradict the presentiments of the learned professor of Berlin?† Without taking into consideration the labours of Cuvier, Brogniart, Humboldt, Klaproth, and so many other naturalists, equally well known at Berlin and Paris, and who speak with so much timidity respecting the new systems in geology which attack Genesis, without speaking of their formal declarations concerning so many things which would prove Moses to be a wise geologist of our own age, if he did not learn the facts which he relates from some other source than the study of the formation of the globe,—do we not know that it is only a mind in which great frivolity of character is joined to deplorable ignorance, that can perceive any flagrant contradictions between Holy Scripture and the profane sciences? But Schleiermacher had, perhaps, that fault very likely to exist in a human mind, of sometimes only glancing at what he ought to have thoroughly examined, relying too much on his own intellectual conceptions, and believing himself capable of seeing the whole of things, of which, in fact, he saw only one side, because he would not move and take up a better position.

\* *Sendschreiben* (Missive to Dr. Lücke) in the *Theolog. Studien und Kritiken*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 489, seq.

† The *Evangelical Gazette* of Berlin, in discussing the assertions of Schleiermacher, could not refrain from comparing them to those of the spies of Joshua, who returned from Canaan terrified by the giants which they had there seen.

## CHAPTER XVI.

OPPOSITION TO SCHLEIERMACHER'S DOCTRINAL SYSTEM — CONSEQUENCES OF SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY FOUNDED UPON SENTIMENT—DE WETTE, LÜCKE, TWESTEN, BAUMGARTEN-CRUSIUS, C. J. NITZSCH, HASE—POSITION OF AUGUST NEANDER IN THEOLOGY.

THE task which Schleiermacher undertook in attempting to restore, by means of powerful arguments derived from the inmost sentiments of the human soul, the principal doctrines taught in all Christian churches, but more especially in the two Protestant communions,—this task was not above his power. That his developments of the religious conscience in matters relating to sin and to grace brought to the world by the Saviour were of a nature to bring back to Christianity many minds that had never reflected on the harmony of human nature with the teachings of the Gospel, is proved by the almost universal opposition excited by the appearance of his doctrinal system, and by the fact that from the advocates of the most vulgar Rationalism to those of the highest speculations of Hegelian philosophy, all have vied in attacking the great man whose nature seemed to impel him towards positive Christianity, while all the tendencies of his mind appeared to incline towards a mystical Pantheism to which he was invited by Spinoza and Fichte.\*

\* The *Literary Gazette* of Halle (No. 115, 116, 117, of the year 1823) accused him of having introduced into his doctrinal system the Pantheism of his discourses. Twisten refuted this accusation in his *Lectures on Doctrine*, 1, 235. But the *Preacher's Journal*, vol. 46 and 47, of 1825, published some articles of Bretschneider, afterwards reprinted separately, and finally incorporated in his *Doctrine of the Lutheran Church*, which made a greater sensation, and which Schleiermacher felt himself called on to answer. Bauer designated this work as a gnostic enterprise (*Tübing. Zeitschrift*, &c. 1828. 220-264. *Christliche Gnosis*, Tüb. 1835. 626-668.) Hegel dared to say that a religion founded on sentiment was an animal religion, since all the faculties of the beasts may be reduced to sentiment, and that we should thus be more religious the more animal we became (in a Preface added by Hegel to the work of Heinrich: *Religion in its Internal Connexion with Science*, p. xviii.). Rosenkranz attacked it in the *Scientific Annals of Berlin*, in the name of speculative philosophy, and contrary to Bretschneider, who had sought to prove that the doctrines were not evangelical because they

But if the adversaries were numerous, some partisans were not slow in appearing, who, using the liberty largely accorded to them by Schleiermacher himself, undertook his defence, and attempted to carry on the labours begun by him, the influence of which was already felt in many parts of Germany.

We must say, however, that before this attempt of Schleiermacher to recognise sentiment as the source of religion, and to erect scientifically on this foundation, weak when alone, a system of Christian doctrine, De Wette had attempted, by means of the philosophy of Fries, to unite reason and sentiment, by securing to all the powers of the mind their special functions, and by recognising the mysteries of the Christian faith as æsthetical symbols of ideas and of religious presentiments. Kantism was thus surpassed, and the philosophy of Jacobi, which had perhaps decided Schleiermacher, perfected. But it was a capital error with De Wette, that he confounded the religious with the æsthetical sentiment, and thought that the theologian could re-adjust, by means of this impulse of the soul, the pieces broken into morsels by the hammer of exegesis.\*

The doctrinal system of Professor De Wette, from its uncertainties and from the air of mysticism which pervades every part of it, necessarily casts the reader into a confusion of ideas little likely to reconcile him to positive Christianity, and makes him ask whether, among the scientific elements which generally compose the works of De Wette, that skilful professor might not have found means to define better what he meant by Christianity revealed by God. This is the more astonish-

were too speculative. Rosenkranz, however, after an impartial exposition of the system, though made, according to his custom, with a slight shade of irony, says that he does not think it evangelical, precisely because it is too empirical, and does not rise sufficiently on the wings of speculation. Other works were also written against this doctrinal system, which, though viewing it in different lights, attempted to prove the weakness of its foundation. Those of Braniss (*Ueber Schleierm. Glaubenslehre*. Berlin, 1824), of Delbrück (*Erörterungen einiger Hauptstücke in Schl. Glaubenslehre*. Bonn, 1827), and of H. Schmid (*Ueber Schl. Glaubenslehre, mit Beziehung auf die Rede über die Religion*. Heidelberg, 1835), are generally regarded as having most deeply penetrated the meaning of the author, and have from that fact provoked answers from the party of Schleiermacher, which have, in no small degree, contributed to gain him numerous adherents. Hermann's *History of Doctrine*, already quoted, contains an article on this system, conscientiously written, though by a very zealous disciple, who seems to go beyond even his master in license (p. 212-278).

\* De Wette (Wilhelm Martin Leberecht) was born near Weimar, in January 1780. After being a professor, successively, at Jena, Heidelberg, and Berlin, he now occupies [he died a few weeks since.—E.] a chair at Basle, where he has been since writing the letter of consolation very innocently addressed to the mother of the young fanatic Sand.



ing since De Wette can advantageously treat of criticism, and nothing can equal criticism in clearness of expression when it chooses to be clear. But the fact is, that De Wette allowed himself to be dazzled by science, when he ought to have followed with more docility the sacred inspirations of his own soul, which would have explained to him better than criticism, facts which have their origin in sentiment as well as in the phenomenal world. A pupil of Fries, so well known by his ancient Teutonic patriotism and by his teachings, which resemble those of Jacobi, from the value which he sets on faith and on the presentiment of the eternal truth which he places above scientific certainty, De Wette, who re-produces some of the ideas of Fries when barren and dry exegesis did not stifle the warmth of his soul, inclines too much to scientific criticism. He does not perceive the entire instability of all productions of human knowledge, and this prevents him from breaking through the chains in which he is held by his Rationalism, strongly tinctured with mysticism. The work in which De Wette has more especially explained his opinions on Christianity is a concise exposition of the Lutheran faith, taken from its origin, and written in the ingenious manner of this learned author.\* But, as is always the case with De Wette, the critical soon succeeds the historical. According to him, in fact, revelation is only the presentiment of God's government of the world in the historical development of religion. And in another of his works he affirms that, to see in any religious manifestation a revelation from God, we ought to be so struck and moved by the power and attractions of truth and religious beauty, that we feel raised spiritually above ourselves; we ought moreover to recognise in this manifestation (*Erscheinung*) an infinitely superior power, before which we involuntarily bend our knees in adoration. Suppose Christianity to be one of these religious manifestations, and, consequently, a divine revelation, still it is merely a received article of faith, that is to say, an ideal judgment, which can rest on no reasonable foundation. The divine carries internal proofs. Now Christianity is not constituted of anything analogous to these received articles of faith; but it contains the eternal ideas of reason in their greatest purity and fulness, and for this reason only is the Christian faith in revelation justified. According to this, we can see in Rationalism only the philosophical mode of appropriating the revealed faith.† In this conflict of words rather than of things we may discover the mental confusion of the rationalist theologian, who is less a Christian than the philosopher, who in fact has glimpses of the truth, but cannot

\* *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik der evangel.-Luther Kirche.* Berlin, 1821.

† *Religion und Theologie*, p. 232. See also *Dogmatik*, p. 52-54.

recognise it in the place whither exegesis has attempted to banish it. This seeming mixture of the combinations of faith and sentiment with critical philosophy, which is continually made by De Wette, has caused some writer, whose name I do not recollect, to say that all his theology ended in vain sighs. For in summing up the religious opinions of De Wette, we find that religion, with him, is faith in an eternal existence of things which are beyond life, founded on the law of the mind, and the presentiment of a kingdom of God, founded on an ineffable sentiment. It is also an internal revelation of God caused only by an external revelation ; and this is the reason why the religious sentiment envelopes itself, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, in symbols or visible images. We must then learn to distinguish the dogma from the symbol, since the development of the symbol only indicates the religious sentiment of which it is formed. How much is it to be desired that such talents were employed in forming a Christian system for which the celebrated professor has as yet only prepared the materials, and the majestic plan of which he has not yet conceived ! We must wait for new labours to reveal it to us, and, meanwhile, it would be a task well worthy the fine talents of the professor of Basle himself to criticise his own works after the example of Augustine. He would find in them plenty of polished stones to aid him in erecting a religious edifice which should fulfil the wishes of so many who rest their hopes on him.\*

Schleiermacher, as we see, had no intention of becoming the founder of a school. But many of the most distinguished theologians of our day, besides De Wette, were attracted to him, not merely by feelings of friendship, but by the fact that, though they maintained their own independence, their views were the same as his. Of these men we may mention Lücke, of Göttingen, Twisten, of Berlin, Baumgarten-Crusius,

\* De Wette's name will again occur to us in our account of the latest attack made by criticism on the authenticity of the Gospels ; but we cannot quit our present subject without mentioning one of his works, written in the form of a romance, and which would have been alone sufficient to secure for him a very distinguished place among German authors, as much from the charm of its style, the rich profusion of graceful and poetical imagery, as from its moral character. I allude to his *Theodor oder des Zweiflers Weihe* (Berlin, 1822). This work is doubtless, like the first discourses of Schleiermacher, very well calculated to convince sceptics of their folly ; but it will never lead to the Gospel those who do not confound the moral and religious wants of the human soul, with a vague desire for the *beau idéal* which should be unceasingly pursued by the disciples of him who appeared on the earth only to show it to us in its purest reality. It is known that Tholuck's *Guido und Julius*, a work of unqualified evangelical piety, was written to compensate for the omissions, far too apparent, to the eye of the Christian, in the *Theodor* of Professor De Wette.

of Jena, Nitzsch and Sack, of Bonn, Ulmann, of Heidelberg, Hase, of Jena, and some others, who do no less honour to him whom they are proud to consider as their master.\* We omit the name of August Neander from this list of the admirers, we might almost say partisans, of Schleiermacher, only because that learned author has taken a distinct position in the same sphere of speculative theology founded on sentiment.

Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke was born near Magdeburg in 1791. He became a pupil of Planck, after studying at Halle under Niemeyer and Gesenius, whose rationalistic lucubrations had not satisfied his mind. Pursuing unhesitatingly the historical path traced out by Planck, he attained a wise comprehension of the nature of Christianity and the means of defending its principles; and he has, perhaps, to thank that venerable old man that he stopped short on the extreme limits of Rationalism. Though entertaining the highest esteem for this teacher, Lücke took advantage of some favourable circumstances, to travel to Berlin, there, in the society of Schleiermacher, De Wette, and Neander, to receive some sparks of that fire which should communicate some strength to the weakened body of the German church, and which has begun to re-kindle since the friends and disciples of Schleiermacher attempted to call it down from heaven. Lücke has published his theological opinions in a great number of writings, partly polemical, partly didactic, which have appeared principally under the form of critiques in the *Göttinger gelehrten Anzeigen* and the *Studien und Kritiken*. None of his works, however, can give a better idea of the independence of his character than the *Commentar zum Johannis evangelium*, the third edition of which appeared in 1843, enriched with all the fruits favourable to the evangelical cause, of recent researches provoked by recent attacks. Lücke has, with some show of reason, been reproached for having written in favour of the nomination of Dr. Strauss to the doctrinal chair of Zurich. It is one thing to proclaim even unlimited liberty of the press, which, in my opinion, is perfectly consistent with the strictest Supernaturalism, and another to place in a chair founded for the purpose of teaching Christianity, one who has publicly avowed an intention of living for the future without Christianity. This friend of De Wette is an example of the inconsistency of many of those Germans who think that they are supernaturalists, because they say that they admit the divine in Jesus, and, above all, his sinlessness, which they regard as the attribute which distinguishes him from all

\* "He whom we call our spiritual father" (*unsern geistigen Vater*), says Lücke, in his Commentary, Preface to the third edition.

other children of humanity, and makes him a true son of God. The number of those who share this inconsistency seems incredible to us who have no idea of this double character in the same person, nor understand how the critic can, in the same individual, be entirely different from the Christian, and the councillor be dissimilar to the humble disciple of Christ. Lücke, after quoting with eulogy the works of his predecessors, Tholuck, Olshausen, and Meyer, says that he shall often be obliged to contradict them; and this is not surprising. But when he adds that "he considers as beneficial to the healthy life of science and the church, individual differences and freedom of opinion, and values them as highly as union and concord," he passes beyond all the limits of toleration. There is nothing better than liberty, and we ought earnestly to desire that in the contests of the church against Rationalism, she will not, as she has before done, fly to the protection of the civil power. But he who considers differences of opinion as signs of health in religion and science, has a strange idea of the moral worth of unity of doctrine; and when he adds that he esteems this diversity as highly as union, he virtually proclaims the domain of religious truth the richest treasure of the lowest classes of society, to be merely an enclosed field in which the cavaliers of criticism only are at liberty to break their lances. Lücke, however, recommends so much liberty, only in order that he himself may be unrestrained in his movements; and he makes such great use of this freedom, that he frequently finds himself alone in his opinions. To those who reproach him with this isolation he thus replies:—"I am sorry for it; but I cannot change: I recognise no theological authority (*theologisches Regiment*) save that of free science and a lively faith in Christ, as I see him in the light of the sacred Scriptures, without troubling myself with obscurities or transfigurations of new sects or schools." This is a frank declaration; but the chiefs of sects and the founders of schools have always held the same language, and they have never been sorry to see themselves followed by disciples. What would become of a military corps, in which every captain should pursue a different direction, or each soldier should march according to his own fancy? Lücke adds, "I have been told that in my explanations I show too much timidity and reserve; and as the reproach has proceeded from a man whose notice honours me, I will reply to it with frankness, since his observation seems to attack my moral and scientific character. In my opinion, then, the essentially theological point in the explanation of the New Testament is merely the humble and believing gratitude for the true and perfect revelation of God in Christ, and for the clear and bright word of God in Scripture. To this word I submit willingly and unreservedly. I do



not think that I belong to the party of those who take away from the positive word of God in the Scriptures all which is displeasing to them, so that at last they retain only an abstraction of their own religious philosophy. But it is also true, that the word of God ought to be understood; and to be so, it must be taken in its historical relations: this requires researches in the domain of history.”\* From these declarations we may see that Lücke would be one of the most enlightened champions of the evangelical cause, if his love of an exaggerated independence and of an unlimited scientific liberty did not deprive him of the right to attack in others what he terms pure abstractions.†

With the opinions of Schleiermacher, it seems natural to connect those of the professor who has succeeded him in the doctrinal chair, and who fills it, if not with the same renown, at least with distinction, and with consequences, perhaps, still more satisfactory. Twesten, by the amiable qualities which distinguish him, and the agreeable suavity of his character, united to profound theological learning, and a great knowledge of his age, cannot fail to obtain over his young pupils an influence the more durable from being acquired less by a striking and brilliant mode of teaching, than by the esteem in which he is generally held. I have not been surprised to learn that at Berlin his lectures are attended by a yearly increasing number of pupils. The fields whose fertility lasts the longest are not exactly those which receive unceasing rain or heat, but those which have a gentle succession of temperate warmth and refreshing rain. The aim of Twesten is, by giving explanations of De Wette's doctrinal system, which he takes as the subject of his labours, to reconcile it with the positive Lutheran creed, and especially to show the practical side of each of its articles, in order that a living faith may spring up in the mind, instead of the alarming barrenness of literal orthodoxy. Thus Twesten considers a doctrinal system only the living re-production of the doctrine of the church, proceeding from the depths of the soul of him who explains it.‡ But he who wishes to re-produce in a living form the doctrine of what he believes to be the true church, can only do so by putting it in a better form; he ought not to conciliate the ruling opinions of his day in order to effect between them and his own peculiar doctrine an union not demanded even by the spirit of civility. And is not Twesten as much in fault as

\* *Commentar*, vol. i., Preface to the second edition.

† Dr. Zeller says, that “Lücke belongs to Rationalism; there can be no doubt of it.”

‡ *Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik der evangelisch.-Luther Kirche*. The first edition of the first volume appeared in 1826, the first part of the second volume in 1837.



De Wette and Schleiermacher, with whom he seems to sympathise much more than with the symbolical books which have nothing in common with these two great theologians, when he entertains their opinions respecting the inspiration of the sacred books and the general action of the spirit of God on the human heart? It is not for me to judge this mode of representing the doctrine of a church with the same severity as does Dr. Strauss in his doctrinal system; but I cannot avoid remarking how the best characters are apt to deceive themselves on subjects of the highest importance, since we are speaking of Christian truth, which is, as its author says, for the establishment or the fall of many. Do not these things refer to the destiny of the immortal soul in a future life? This destiny was clearly described in the old doctrinal system, and the great majority of the theologians of our day, even those least infected with Rationalism, leave it in a discreet silence, so that we should say, judging from the best among them, that with the advocates of restored theology, as with the Hegelians, men are considered as nothing, and humanity alone is esteemed of importance. We should say that all their efforts tend by different ways to the common aim of elevating this poor idol of humanity at the expense of the crowd of human beings who, tossed on the waves of contradictory opinions respecting matters which they had long thought to be the nurture of their souls, rush at last headlong into the gulf of eternity, with disgust for religion in their hearts, and often with blasphemy on their lips. It is most assuredly far from my intention to address specially to Twisten, reflections which spring naturally from my subject, but I cannot withhold them when I see writers of high merit pass their whole lives in circuitous journeys round about the field of combat, when they might occupy a stronger position had they more decided characters, when they might greatly contribute to the victory of the Christian truths which they themselves feel, but whose imprescriptible rights they dare not maintain, lest they should offend science or provoke the attacks of criticism.

In this list of speculative theologians, I ought to place a writer who has distinguished himself more especially in historico-dogmatical theology, and who hardly allows us an insight into the sanctuary of his thoughts. I allude to Baumgarten-Crusius, now professor at Jena. His legitimate enthusiasm for Schleiermacher would certainly place him among the partisans of that theologian,\* did not his writings show a changefulness of mind which causes him to esteem the philosophy of Fichte as much as the systems of Jacobi and Fries, while in one of his works he seems to take particularly under his protection that of Schel-

\* See *Ueber Schleiermacher, seine Denkart und seine Verdienste*. Jena, 1834.

ling, and defines philosophy as "attempts to arrive at eternal life."\* His *Einleitung*, where this thought is expressed, should be, according to the author's plan, a scientific explanation of the Christian religion, and of the Protestant creed; he has executed the work with talent, but with a suppression of his own opinions, which disappoints the reader. But the work of Baumgarten-Crusius which is most rich in learning is his *Compendium of the History of Doctrine*, which we have already mentioned, and in which he reviews, in the most animated manner, all the manifestations of the religious spirit at all periods of Christianity. The tendency of this work is evidently Supernaturalistic, but it is so undecided that Rationalism also might claim the production, if the writer had not, on different subjects, expressed himself strongly against Wegscheider and his party. I will, however, quote the criticism of a more skilful judge than myself: "With respect to knowledge, as well as some other points, we shall find many features of resemblance between Baumgarten-Crusius and Semler. There is the same facility of conception, but the same want of connexion and unity of ideas; the same abundance of interesting notices of different kinds, and also the same defect in compilation and representation. With respect to theological convictions, there are the same ideas respecting religiousness or Christianity, and also the same groundless and immeasurable indecision, and the same scepticism. But in Semler, the critical talent and the spirit of investigation are much greater than in Baumgarten-Crusius; while, on the other side, Baumgarten-Crusius is perfectly free from what we call triviality in Semler, and is, on the contrary, distinguished by the richest mental endowments."†

Karl Immanuel Nitzsch‡ advanced much further than his father on the path towards strictly Christian opinions, but a fatal eclecticism seems to have arrested his progress. He is the fellow-labourer of Ullmann and Umbreit in the review *Studien und Kritiken*, and shows a great degree of sagacity in penetrating into the subjects which he treats. We have not yet forgotten his series of articles on the *Creed* of Möhler, in which he displayed such strength of logic and such an amount of knowledge.§ But the question of the church paralysed his zeal and stranded his fine talents; and until theology employs itself in re-modelling the church apostolically, the best efforts will be wrecked by this touchstone of every system which has not a church privileged

\* *Einleitung in das Studium der Dogmatik*. Leipzig, 1820.

† See the *Vermischte Schriften* of Tholuek, vol. ii. 45. Baumgarten-Crusius was born at Merseburg, in 1788.

‡ Professor at Bonn since 1822.

§ These three articles of Nitzsch have since been published separately.

to teach. He has developed his opinions on Christian doctrine in a special work,\* the principal aim of which, viz., the attempt to re-kindle the unity of Christian life in the diversity of knowledge and operation, is explained according to the traditions of the apostolic church, and without regard to its historical development, or to the necessities of the time.

Like all theologians who reject the symbolical books, Nitzsch wishes that Christian doctrine should be only the system of biblical truth; and in undertaking the task of arranging this system, he takes care especially to remove every idea which may, even in the least degree, remind him of the instructions of the creed. Then he applies himself to the comparison of the different apostolical traditions, in order to deduce from them a whole, which he terms a system of Christian doctrine. As the result of this is far from being contrary to the fundamental principles of the church, it would seem that he ought to be reckoned among the pure supernaturalists, but, like Lücke, he is not so in the true acceptation of the word, since he receives the doctrine, not because it comes to him from the inspired volume, but only because he pre-supposes its truth.

In this class of speculative theologians we must also place a writer of an elegant and original mind, who often manifests his intention of being independent, of pursuing the path which seems best to himself, free from all restraint, uninfluenced by individuals or sects, a writer who says to the ancient doctrinal system, You no longer suit our age, and who has raised his voice against critical Rationalism in so decided a manner, that he has provoked loud outcries from its adherents. I refer to Karl Hase, theological professor, and privy councillor, at Jena. His opinions, however, are so scattered throughout his works, and there is so little harmony among them, that we can hardly place him among those Rationalists who seek to incorporate supernaturalism in their speculative theology, unless, indeed, we consider as a complete system the following summary, which may be made of his principles. Religion is our relation to God, the absolute one, who by an infinite love was induced to communicate his being to an infinite number of creatures. The essence of humanity consists in the infinite created from the finite by the love for the infinite, which man seeks to appropriate to himself. The impediment to this divine love is objectively evil, and subjectively sin. No moment of the present exists without the feeling of sin, since no one possesses in himself the plenitude of infinite love. Love, however, remains, and presents itself as a loving bond of reconciliation with God.

\* *System der christlichen Lehre*, 3rd edition. Bonn, 1837.

This reconciliation is realised by Christianity, because it forms a treaty of love between God and man.\*

If we observe the phraseology of Hase, we shall immediately see that his studies have been influenced by the different philosophical systems which have lately disputed the possession of the field of science. Schelling and Schleiermacher appear to have had most weight with him; and this explains the fact, that though a decided rationalist, so far as concerns the great questions of dispute between that system and orthodoxy, he has, nevertheless, expressed contempt for the *vulgar* Rationalism of Röhr, Wegscheider, and Schulz, on whose foreheads the epithet of *vulgar*, which has, since used by Hase, become historical, remains as though branded thereon with a hot iron.†

At the time when Wegscheider and Gesenius were still attracting attention at Halle, Hase was preparing with care an edition of the symbolical books of the Lutheran church, and it seemed at first that his own opinions did not differ widely from the contents of the works which he sought to restore to honour.‡ But in the very work which seemed to have this end in view, are found these elegant sentences, which undeceived supernaturalistic Christians: "The doctrinal system of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reminds me of one of our ancient German cathedrals, with its arches pointing to heaven and its wonderful symbolical ornaments. A cathedral like those of our ancestors can no longer be built. For some years they have been considered as belonging to a Gothic and barbarous style of architecture. Yet in observing them, we feel as if in the house of God."§ The doctrinal work which contains these beautiful expressions shows throughout that they give a correct idea of Hase's sentiments, and that for once at least poetry expresses a reality. But if we examine its meaning, we discover in it the known intention of Hase to unite by his science the objective faith of Christianity with the subjectivity of the human being in its free development, and to produce by this labour of the intellect the doctrine of the future

\* See *Lehrbuch der evangelischen Dogmatik*, 2nd edit. Leipzig, 1838; and *Gnosis, oder evangelische Glaubenslehre für die Gebildeten*. Leipzig, 1827. A spiritual but severe criticism on Hase's doctrinal opinions is to be found in Bretschneider's *Dogmatik*.

† The editor of the *Literary Gazette* of Halle declares, on the contrary, that this title ought to be considered as *his crown of laurel*.

‡ Hase was born in 1800, at Steinbach, in the principality of Altenberg. After a youth passed in stormy political agitation, he is now settled as theological professor at Leipzig, where he attracts a great number of hearers.

§ *Hutterus redivivus*. Preface to the 4th edition. Leipzig, 1839. This work is a faithful exposition of the ancient Lutheran doctrine as compared with the modern.



church. The principal merit of this doctrinal work of Hase, as of that which he afterwards published,\* is the concise explanation of the manner in which the Lutheran doctrines were conceived. We must not, however, imagine that he wishes to revive the ancient doctrines of Hutter, the professor of Wittenberg; if he wishes to see the works of that professor in the hands of his readers, it is only on condition that they are treated as an university manual. "For," says he, "the compiler of an academical manual in our day, who wishes to attain his end, must be able to sacrifice his own individual opinions, and devote himself entirely to the object of a general historical faith."† That is to say, in other words, that a doctrinal system ought to be merely a history of the variations of the human mind respecting religion.

From these views we may imagine that Hase's opinions respecting Christ are far from orthodox. He formally denies our Lord's unity of nature with the Father, and he endeavours to prove this position rather by recalling the mortal conduct of Christ, which was always submissive and impressed with a truly filial piety, than by refuting the texts of Scripture which declare his participation in the Deity. He says well in speaking of Jesus,—“When he recognised in himself the Messiah, he raised the theocratical and mystical signification of the Son of God to its highest religious meaning.”‡ But the Socinians would say the same.

It is true that, like all other speculative theologians, he employs the expression, *God-man* (*Gott-mensch*), to show the nature of the person of Christ. But as we all, in one sense, partake of the divine nature, and as we ought all to labour to attain the perfect stature of Christ, or, to use Hase's expression, as we ought all to believe, in order to reach that point at which every son of man is declared a son of God, we can entertain no doubts of the Socinianism of the author under consideration. If, however, we are not alarmed by the name Socinian, which, indeed, may be applied to every theologian of any importance in the present day, we shall feel admiration for the transformation effected on Rationalism by Hase's opinions. So does he modify it, that, with great justice, he considers the doctrine of man's redemption as the fundamental and characteristic article of Christian faith, and charity or love as the essence of religion. Thus, Hase's creed is very simple, and consists merely in faith in the pardon announced by the Gospel.§

\* *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, 2nd edit. Leipzig, 1838.

† *Hutterus redivivus*, p. xi.

‡ *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, p. 244. See also his *Life of Jesus*, p. 439.

§ In an explanation which he has given of his own work, *Evangelical Doctrine* (*New Gazette of Jena*, 1842. 110), in answer to the critiques of Julius Müller and of Dorner, Hase says, "Strange and artful plans are again being formed, to



I cannot better close my remarks on this theologian, who, as yet, has only held out hopes to his numerous followers, than by giving his opinions on the dispute between Rationalism and Supernaturalism. In spite of much ingenious suppression, he thus treats the question : "The decision between the two systems of Rationalism and Supernaturalism depends on this thesis, Can the human mind, as it actually exists, produce by itself religious life, as a tendency to perfection ? If this be possible, then we cannot understand why it should accept unconditionally a foreign revelation, even admitting that such a revelation has, at some period, taken place, or has been necessary. This question must be settled in life by action, in the sciences by enlightenment, and thus are the claims of Rationalism to be decided. To come to this conclusion, we must isolate ourselves from Christianity, and if, in so doing, we find that the philosophical maxims of faith which we have acquired, correspond essentially with the articles of Christian faith developed in a purely historical manner, we shall prove that Christianity is, in its essence, a religion of reason,—we shall prove the necessity of a Christian Rationalism. But if, on the contrary, the human mind, in this development of its religious disposition on any point, finds in itself a total incapacity for religion, or a constant conflict, then Reason herself will ask from Supernaturalism what she is deficient in, to obtain the knowledge and possession of the religious life. This decision will never be really made until philosophy and Christian faith are developed in their intrinsic worth, and even then, however the question may be settled, one of the systems will be justified only as a principle, and not in its respective doctrines."\*

Thus, on one side it is confessed that Christianity ought to be the life of the people, that it alone can elevate man to a high degree of morality ; but, on the other side, it is doubted whether Rationalism or Supernaturalism be the guide to true Christianity ; and when the time shall arrive for the solution of this question, even then we shall have made no progress, since it will be necessary to re-commence the examination of each article of doctrine. Oh ! how true are those words of

connect the doctrine of ancient times with both strong and weak parties of the present day ; but if this attempt proceeds from men really pious, and attached to the opinions of our ancestors, and is not a mere philosophical bastard dressed in the clothes of the God-man, I greatly fear lest the efforts to present as Christianity that which is only a perishable form of it, will end in preparing a path for those who desire to place an impassable gulf between the Christian faith and modern culture."

\* *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, 18.

the celebrated Claudius, "Man lives not by the bread alone which the learned have prepared for him." \*

Still let not Christians despair. This school of Schleiermacher, notwithstanding the vagueness of its assertions, has in its ranks men of strong minds, and their happy influence cannot fail to increase in proportion as, penetrating into the mysterious depths of human nature, and ceasing to be dazzled by the splendour of science which seems to restrain them in their investigations, they become convinced themselves, and convince others, that if the Gospel is the truth, there is not a single precept uttered by Jesus or his apostles, not a fact related by them, which has not its origin in the human heart and its parallel in nature. A fine example is presented to these theologians, in the learned professor who was the friend and colleague of Schleiermacher, and who, to arrive at Christian truth, pursues not the ever-adventurous path of *à priori* demonstration, but that of experience, not in the empirical sense of the term, but as Jesus understood it when he commanded us to consult our conscience if we would be convinced of the divinity of his doctrine. The whole doctrinal system of August Neander, if we may so designate the operation of that Christianity whose different phases in the course of ages he has described,—the whole of this is, we say, founded upon sentiment, which he makes the judge between the moral wants of the soul and the remedies which the Gospel offers for its complete cure. His work entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Geschichte des christlichen Lebens* shows us how efficacious is this method in releasing from the bonds of error, well-intentioned men; and his great history of the Christian religion has no other aim than to show in the large and imposing picture which he unfolds to our view, that, in all times, faith in the religion of Jesus has possessed a divine power, which has caused that religion alone to produce more virtues than all other religions united could do, that thus the history of Christianity is a school of experience for moral and religious life, and that we need only listen earnestly to hear its sweet voice and to feel to the very depths of our being a kindling and enlivening glow.† Not that Neander entertains the

\* *Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brod allein, das die Gelehrten einbrocken.*

† Dr. Johann August Wilhelm Neander, Professor at the University of Berlin, was born at Göttingen in 1789. He must not be confounded with Daniel Amadeus Neander, general superintendent of the province of Brandenburg, who was born at Langefeld in 1775. The opinions of the latter are quite rationalistic, and even if the collection of his sermons did not prove this to be the case, his participation in the editorship of the *Journal of Preachers* would be sufficient to distinguish his religious opinions from the Christian opinions of August Neander.

least contempt for the use of science in religious matters. He who when only twenty-two published the age of the Emperor Julian, the age of St. Bernard a year afterwards, and, at a later period, the history of the gnostic systems and the age of St. John Chrysostom; he who within the last ten years, without the slightest interruption to his numerous lectures at the University of Berlin, has given to the world a vast history of the church, which is found on the table, not only of every learned professional man, but also of every layman in Germany,—this man has surely done enough to show his respect for science. But we see that he considers it merely as a means of proving truths already felt by the heart, and that he makes it subordinate to the influence of him who has declared himself to be the way, the truth, and the life.\*

Neander not only employs advantageously the agency of science in removing the difficulties with which time and sophistry have obscured Christian truth, but he also does it with an unfailing latitude of principles. Both with regard to the professors Gesenius and Wegscheider, and to Dr. Strauss, in his criticism on the Gospels, he has always maintained that the living faith which he wishes to reign in the church can only arise from liberty of discussion; and in this every reasonable supernaturalist will agree with him. But he seems to us to go too far when, like the rationalists, he joins De Wette in distinguishing the doctrine of the theologian from the pure and simple faith of the Christian believer. We quite agree with Neander in saying that if we wish to preserve incorrupt the work of God, we should permit free development to the progress of the human mind according to the laws of divine wisdom, if we wish to reach the end prescribed by that wisdom. But is it not a prejudicial mistake to demand from the simple believer the submission of the mind to a doctrine, every part of which the theologian is permitted to criticise? Can Neander, who so ably pleads the cause of Christian equality, become the champion of a privilege which would establish in the church a caste more monstrous than the Roman hierarchy, so different in its sympathies, can be? On this point we must say that we consider the arguments of the *Evangelical Gazette* against Neander, much more valid than those of the learned professor; but we by no means intend to justify the attack of the *Gazette* which provoked Neander's declaration. Those who wish to form some idea of the doctrinal position of Neander are referred not only to the letters

\* Nine volumes have appeared of the *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche*, (Hamburg, 1825-1841,) which bring it down to the 12th century. We must regret that Neander has employed himself on an improved edition of these nine volumes instead of continuing a work so impatiently looked for by the public.

which I have already quoted, but also to the two prefaces to his *Life of Jesus* in answer to that of Strauss, which seem to have made a happy impression on his learned opponent. We will give some extracts. "Herder said to Lavater, It is impossible for me to write a life of Jesus according to the evangelists. Instead of writing his life, let us try to become like him. So thought Herder; but why should not the historian employ himself on the most sublime subject of humanity? why should human activity neglect that which can sanctify it, even when we feel that we have fallen far short of our task? Since the artist, with the sole aid of his imagination and pious enthusiasm, creates for himself an image of Christ, we can, with the historical fragments which we possess, and whose scattered parts we re-unite, attempt the same work. Yes, we feel the necessity of vividly representing to ourselves this historical ideal which belongs to all ages, of considering it on the grounds of science and the development of life. This necessity never ceases: the image of Christ is neither of yesterday nor to-day; though it grows young again constantly with humanity, and ever communicates to the world an impulse which raises it towards heaven. For those who would know my position with respect to the different parties now disputing in the field of theology, though I have explained it in a previous work,\* I repeat unreservedly what, after serious investigation, made without prejudice but with respect for all that is sacred, I have concluded to be true, or at least probable. As Luther says, he who has good in view must allow the devil to contradict him. Without doubt I shall displease two parties, that which desires to renew everything by violent means, and which, in its presumptuous folly, thinks that it can even shake the rock of ages; and that which by violent means, at the expense of the free spirit of truth, would retain or restore all that is old, even that which has outlived itself.† I shall also displease the hypercritical, who submit sacred history to the subjective arbitration of a perspicacity beyond all limit; as well as those who hold in contempt all criticism, or at least all founded on internal arguments. These two parties have one thing in common; they alike contradict the spirit of truth and man's consciousness of it, and thus endanger the progress of sound mental culture. I am persuaded that an impartial criticism ap-

\* In the Preface to *Geschichte der Pflanzung und Leitung der Kirche*, so well translated by M. Fontanès under the title *Histoire du siècle apostolique*, 2 vols. Paris and Geneva, 1836.

† These words against the ultra-supernaturalists are somewhat strong; have I misunderstood them? "Und denen, welche auf gewaltsame Weise, auf Kosten des unbefangenen Wahrheitssinnes, alles Alte und auch das Veraltete, was sich selbst überlebt hat, festhalten oder zurück führen wollen."



plied to all which we have received by written and historical tradition is not only consistent with the childlike faith, without which no Christianity, and therefore no Christian theology, could exist, but from it also results the consecration of the true sense of Scripture which is essential to the prosperity of theology, as well as the most efficacious means for its preservation.”\*

“Counsellor Schulz, in a critique on my work, accuses me of contradicting my previous assertions. I hope that the passage which has caused this misunderstanding will be more clearly expressed in the second edition. But respecting this enthusiasm for reason, I cannot do better than quote the words of Jacobi, which so well characterise this enthusiasm for reason which is no reason. ‘Your faith,’ said he, (Jacobi, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 492,) ‘is always reason, and you can recognise the reason of another only in his faith. You do not inquire in what way he feels, perceives, observes, judges, and concludes, but you only ask what he thinks upon a subject: that you think enough to show whether or not his sentiments are in harmony with the canon.’ This view, so well described by Jacobi, gives rise to a prejudice which leads to unjust judgments on those who think differently from yourselves, and to errors of which you remain in ignorance, just as enthusiasm for an absolute doctrine, which is the rule of a certain number of opinions or maxims connected with it, causes you to depreciate, with equal injustice, the share which each claims in the Christian faith.”†

“What will be said of my assertions by those who admit the symbolical books? What any one may say, is a matter of perfect indifference to me. We have here to do only with Christian truth. I could not subscribe to one of the creeds as the unconditional expression of my religious convictions, excepting to that of the apostles, which is the primitive fact of the Christian faith essential to the existence of a Christian church. I think that when we have passed through the storms and schisms of the present day, we shall have a new and more majestic constitution of the church, which will infuse the Holy Spirit into religious life, will bring back to unity the different really Christian confessions of faith, which, though the expositions given of them are always defective, and bear the variable impress of their period, will nevertheless be the expression of Christian truth, and thus we shall have a creed corresponding to the development of the church, if, at least, such an expression of the spirit which will animate it be found neces-

\* *Das Leben Jesu*, already quoted, xii.-xiv.

† *Das Leben*, &c., xviii.-xix.



sary. But I ought, however, to confess, with the theologians here mentioned, that I hold to the fundamental principle of the Reformation and of the Evangelical church, viz., the doctrine of the corruption of human nature. But this doctrine is not opposed to the belief in the divine origin of human nature, but rather implies it, through the justification by faith in Jesus as the Saviour. I respect then, as the foundation of the Evangelical church, the essence of the Confession of Augsburg, and of its apology, in so far as it expresses this fundamental principle. Dr. Schulz is surprised at my belief in the proneness of our nature to sin. I am much more surprised that any man can dispute a truth, not only attested by Scripture, but also graven upon the human heart. As to the expressions 'natural reason' and 'justification,' which he wishes me to remove from my works, I cannot gratify him, since these expressions are too well established in the Evangelical church, and the ideas which they represent are too well founded in biblical anthropology. They have not been invented by a 'neo-evangelical' theology, but have descended in a direct line from the ancient faith. Those are only false instructors (whose devastation, however, will prepare for a better future) who can attack these ideas."\*

Thus does Dr. Neander answer those who ask for some testimony of his faith, and who would see him take a more decided tone. History will say whether, by following the path which he considers to be the *true medium* between parties,† he will attain the noble end that he has in view, of preparing for a glorious day, the bright dawn of which he foresees, when the sun of a real and living faith in the Gospel shall form the happiness of all nations.‡ Let us close these remarks on August Neander by quoting a criticism on him, written by a distinguished man of letters, who, though of opposite opinions in philosophy and religion, nevertheless does justice to his eminent talents. "August Neander is a true father of the church, such as, in every age, the church would wish to have. But in saying this, we regard only the sentiments by which he is influenced, and not his scientific views. Whatever these may be, his intentions are worthy our esteem (*liebenswürdig*), as those of true Christianity generally are. Kant has said, 'Christianity, besides the high esteem irresistibly inspired by the holiness of its laws, possesses also something to be loved in itself. I do not mean the love due to the person who acquired it for us by so great

\* *Das Leben*, &c., xviii.-xx.

† With this proposition Neander commences a circular of invitation to the Annual Meeting of the Biblical Society.

‡ A most strictly supernaturalistic refutation of this work of Neander's is to be found in the *Review of Lutheran Theology*, Part I. 1846. p. 146.

a sacrifice, but the goodness of the thing in itself, that is to say, the moral constitution founded by the Gospel. Esteem, undoubtedly, should hold the highest rank, since, without it, no true love can exist; though we may feel love for the person; but if to Christianity we would join even divine authority, notwithstanding the best intentions and an excellent purpose, this amiability will immediately disappear; for there is an inconsistency in commanding not only that a thing shall be done, but also that it shall be done with pleasure.' . . . . . Now Neander is a true disciple of these liberal views of Christianity. . . . . He has pointed out three deviations from the true medium, most hurtful in their consequences, and has justly shown true and pure Christianity to be an antidote to the evil, and a high unity which can reconcile oppositions. But in attributing to Christianity exclusively the true medium, and implying that, apart from Christianity, it cannot be found, he shows that Christian bigotry which he shares with all his friends (*Berufsgenossen*) who would derive from Christianity, as revealed in a supernatural manner, all that is just, true and good, instead of showing its source in the nature and reason of man. True and pure Christianity does not differ from the pure religion of reason, and Neander, instead of proclaiming the Gospel raised above all human opposition, and, for that reason, the *true medium*, should have entitled his programme, Reason raised above all opposition." \* If these words of a writer entirely devoted to literary studies describe a rationalist in religion, they are only the better calculated to bring about the results expected by the religious world of Germany from the serious and profound labours to which Neander has devoted his life, and which have gained for him the sincere homage of writers opposed to science.

\* See the *Piloten*, edited by Laube, No. 94, for 1841. A French journal, the *Archives du Christianisme*, the organ of old Calvinism, said, in speaking of Neander, and of those who entertained similar views, "We must confess that the perusal of German books in support of supernaturalism has not a favourable influence on our spiritual condition; we find in them doubtful and uncertain arguments instead of motives for faith and love."—(*Archives*, vol. iv. p. 37.) The writers of this journal had doubtless forgotten this passage when they blamed me severely for having said that certain supernaturalists of Germany inclined towards Rationalism.

## CHAPTER XVII.

GNOSTIC SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY, OR THAT FOUNDED SOLELY ON  
KNOWLEDGE—MARHEINECKE—STRAUSS.

IF it was a difficult task to attempt to transform traditional Christianity into a system of strong conceptions and ingenious connexion in all its parts, we can easily imagine that it could not be less difficult to do the same for the Lutheranism of the sixteenth century. To this task, however, did Marheinecke, a professor of Berlin, devote himself with a perseverance worthy of a better end. He began his work by surveying the field of philosophy, and, finding in Hegel that which suited his purpose, he adopted Hegelian formulas to express the Lutheran faith.\* Marheinecke's first position is this—that to consider reason as the original source of religion is quite as absurd as to suppose that we can receive a divine revelation without the use of reason; and as all the truths of faith and life known by the Israelitish and other people show, according to him, in their existence, their common descent from the eternal reason of God, who, before assuming human nature, sowed among all people the germ of divine wisdom, it follows that the attention of all should naturally be fixed on the Son of God, who is their eternal heaven, and that all should constantly address to him prayer, since it is to the soul what respiration is to the body. We must not apply to the Bible only, still less to the letter of the Bible, to acquire this wisdom, since, if the existence of the word of God in the Bible were as essential to the essence of religion as the word of God in general, Christ himself should have been the author of the Bible, if he wished entirely to accomplish the work of religion. Such are the principles of Marheinecke: to justify them, he says to the followers of Jacobi and Fries, that sentiment can produce in him who trusts to it only an obscure and therefore worthless faith; for faith, to have any value, must be radiant with clearness; and can such a faith exist save in idea and knowledge? Faith, then, cannot

\* *Die Grundlehren der christl. Dogmatik als Wissenschaft.* Berlin, 1819, revised in 1827. See also *Lehrbuch des christlichen Glaubens und Lebens für denkende Christen.* Berlin. 2nd edit. 1826.

be a thing distinct from knowledge ; and knowledge, in its turn, will be only the consciousness of the consciousness of God. In this system of doctrine we next find opinions on God and his attributes ; on God in Himself, who is the Father—on God out of Himself, who is the Son—and on God self-sufficing, who is the Holy Spirit. His proof of the existence of a God lies in these words : Lead a pure and divine life, and God will reveal Himself to you in such a way that you will never doubt again. Certainly, the man who doubts the existence of God has not a healthy mind ; but is it enough to say to a sick man, Cure thyself, and thou wilt no longer need a cure ? Without doubt, this argument is very powerful with those who are far advanced in religious truth, and therefore Christ commanded us to do the will of his Father, and then we should understand the divinity of his mission ; but I cannot see that it is a decisive argument for the ignorant man or the sceptic. This is not the only false reasoning which we discover on examining the system, the very foundation of which is a false argument ; for the author says, in speaking of religion, that all truth is religious, since religion alone knows the truth.

Marheinecke, who rejected sentiment as the foundation of knowledge, shows his consistency when he requires from man the entire renunciation of the sentiment of his individuality, and even of the distinction between God and himself, and the forgetfulness, in the idea of God, of all knowledge of self. This Marheinecke calls “the insertion of the human thought in the divine thought ;” and without it he maintains that mind can never arrive at a true, happy and eternal existence. These are his own expressions :—“The first step towards true religion is for the mind to renounce its individuality, and to rest entirely in God. Every step in the opposite direction leads to ruin. But if the mind advances towards the light, it is delivered from vile and unworthy things ; it is delivered from itself—that is to say, from the care of preserving the *I* and subjectivity, by arriving at the life in God as truth, and consequently at the true life. The truth and reality of human nature consist not in its individuality, but in its admission into a superior nature. Only in coming to God does man come to himself. The truth of human nature is divine nature. Divinity is the only true humanity, and mere humanity is untrue, is evil.” We fear that such language will be unintelligible to many ; and of what use are religious systems which are inapplicable to the majority ? And even did we feel the strongest desire to renounce our individuality, and plunge into the fathomless depths of the divine essence, we should naturally ask how is this to be effected : yet Marheinecke gives no answer to this question in his work ; for we must unquestionably submit to the guidance of the divine will. All

ancient theologians say the same, and speculative theology only repeats the assertion.

All this speculation is entirely unfounded, and is opposed to our sentiments respecting our own nature, which recognise a distinction between the object and the subject which has an intimate and indestructible consciousness of it. It follows, therefore, that this modern gnosticism will remain only as the beautiful dream of a fertile imagination, and will not satisfy those souls longing for truth, which wish rather for re-assurance and consolation, than for illumination.

I have shown the nature of the Trinity of God recognised by Marheinecke. It furnishes him with a division of his work. By mentioning the subjects treated in each book, we shall show how our author applies his system to the Lutheran doctrine of the symbolical books. The first part treats of the divine essence or ideas of the reasonable sentiment, as opposed to nature destitute of knowledge; then of the existence of God or the reality of ideas, as opposed to nature as an appearance of existence; and again of the divine attributes or the union of thought and existence, of knowledge and the will. The second part relates to God the Son, that is to say, to the internal revelation in itself, which Marheinecke calls the testimony of the Son, and the external revelation, comprehending the creation, the preservation of the world, evil and sin, and its annihilation by redemption. The third part is devoted to the Holy Spirit and its operations, conversion, liberty, the kingdom of God or the church, and finally death, judgment, and eternity. We see thus, that orthodoxy seems to have no cause of complaint against speculative Rationalism, since it rejects no Scripture doctrine, provided we allow it to explain them in its own way. I will quote only one example to prove this substitution of new doctrines for ancient, under cover of words borrowed from the creeds of the church: "The doctrine of the Son of God is the doctrine of the internal and external revelation of God. This distinction is lost in the unity of God revealed and of the world in the person of a man. If we consider the internal revelation, it is God reflecting on Himself. In this thought God becomes an object to Himself, and there is the Son, who is the revelation of the Father. This revelation of God is His own internal clearness, so that without the Son, God would not see Himself. Thus the internal revelation of God is His own appearance, His own action in thinking, His reflection on Himself." What obscurity has this learned author plunged into, for the strange pleasure of restoring orthodoxy with different expressions and different ideas from those of the apostles! Many Christians have often been embarrassed by this majestic introduction to St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the



Word was God . . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Compared with Marheinecke's works, however, these words seem most clear. We cannot avoid regretting that so great talents and the best intentions should have been spent only for a gnosticism, which can never become popular ; though Christianity ought to be so, if it is to fulfil its principal destiny. To continue our extracts : " It is not given to human nature to assume the divine nature, since the human exists personally only in the divine ; but the divine nature may assume human nature. In renouncing his mental individuality, man rises above himself without renouncing his nature, and God, in departing from His mental absoluteness, descends to humanity without leaving His divine nature. So that the one as God in human nature, and the other as man in the divine nature, together form a whole, which is the God-man." Now, according to Marheinecke, Jesus was the being in whom the unity of God and of man was realised, and thus God revealed Himself externally as the Son. In the person of this God-man, reason was not corrupted by the error committed by all other men, that of considering the world and the individuality of each man as self-existing things, an error which practically causes us to renounce reason. No, Christ preserved intact the unity of God and of the world, and in that he showed himself a normal and divine man. The grace and wisdom which are essentially revealed in him are communicated by him to all those to whom this truth is certainly revealed by their faith in the Saviour as the God-man, and by this acquisition they become children of God.

By these speculations, which he modified but very slightly in his pulpit instructions, the professor endeavoured to restore under a better form the Lutheran creed now universally rejected. But it would appear that he afterwards perceived the futility of his own efforts, and the general false tendency of Hegel's philosophy, the extravagances of which he deploras, and completely disavows the consequences deduced from it by bolder logicians, such as Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Feuerbach, whom, indeed, he does not consider to be Hegelians.\* The humble and regretful tone of Marheinecke's later work forms a strange contrast to the self-sufficiency of certain Hegelians who, if they have really found that for which others are still seeking, ought only to be the more modest and more benevolently inclined to poor wanderers. The numerous complaints, too, which this work contains, of friends and enemies, show the despair felt by the sincere and learned author. The philosophy of Hegel, according to him, has now sunk to the lowest

\* *Einleitung in die öffentlichen Vorlesungen über die Bedeutung der Hegelschen Philosophie in der Christlichen Theologie nebst einem Separatvotum über Bauers Kritik der evangel. Geschichte.* Berlin, 1842.

depth of abasement, not because it has been satisfactorily refuted, but because it has been attacked by all the weak and superficial.\* He then insinuates reproaches against the Prussian government, for what he calls its intention of teaching a state philosophy, grows angry with those whom he calls *pious denouncers*, and ends by inviting all the adversaries of Hegel to bring forward a powerful refutation of his principles, to deliver the world from its errors, and to show that they are heroes who can substitute something better for this philosophy. For it is only by means of a true philosophy that we shall find it easy to distinguish the false.†

The declaration of Marheinecke with respect to Bruno Bauer, which is affixed to this introduction to his lectures, was a necessary consequence of the position in which he was placed. When he foresaw the possibility of an approaching oppression of the Hegelian philosophy, of which he considered himself the purest representative, he did right to claim for others the liberty of teaching, which he might be obliged to claim for himself. But can we compare the position of Bruno Bauer to that of the pure Hegelians? They, though changing the nature of the spirit of Christianity, yet persist in believing themselves the possessors of its true principles, while Bauer makes a complete divorce between Christianity and philosophy, and declares the latter to be superior to all the forms of religion which Christianity would borrow. But I shall anticipate if I do not speak first of the author of the new school of speculative Hegelian philosophy.

Since Lutheranism has ceased to have the power of preserving the religion committed to its care, and since, in spite of it, philosophy has become the ruling power in matters of faith, it was quite natural that a man should appear and say to the two parties, "You tire the world with your endless debates; if they were advantageous to religion they would be equally so to the morals of your people; experience proves that you have lost the path of morality, and the feeble and powerless manner in which you defend your pretensions shows that you have outlived yourselves. Mine, then, be it to give the death-blow to this lifeless body; and, though denying the Christianity of the Gospels, even though placing in the class of myths all the facts there related, still to give to coming generations a better understanding of Christianity, because I shall be able to show you that the supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection, and his ascension, *remain eternal truths*,

\* *Einleitung in die öffentlichen Vorlesungen über die Bedeutung der Hegelschen Philosophie in der Christlichen Theologie nebst einem Separatvotum über Bauers Kritik der evangel. Geschichte.* Berlin, 1842. p. 14.

† *Ibid.* p. 18-26.

however we may doubt the reality of the historical facts on which they rest." In this spirit, and with these intentions, Strauss gave to the learned world his *Life of Jesus*.\* I say to the learned world, because it is an established custom among German theologians to think themselves a class so distinct from the other classes of society, that they claim the right of having books for themselves alone, and of using other books in their connexion with the people. This pretension is very extraordinary, since Protestantism has destroyed the idea of a priesthood, and we do not see what society has gained in changing the priest, essentially the friend of the people, for the learned man with whom the word people is a synonyme for ignorant. Dr. Strauss, however, sincerely believed that his book would be read only by men of his own profession; to ensure this he should have followed the example of Bretschneider, whose *Probabilia* were not written in German. Had he done so, the people would not have known as much as he did of this new method of destroying the Christian ideas in the world, and the election of Strauss to the doctrinal chair of Zurich would not have been opposed. When, therefore, he complained of the interference of the laity in matters not concerning them, he should have known that the voice of God often speaks by the voice of the people, and that he himself had prepared the way for it.

Strauss's first position is very simple, being merely the unqualified denial of the authenticity of the Gospels. By this denial he attempts to throw light on points which the imperfect criticism of his predecessors had only obscured. What, says he, can be worse than to attribute, as does vulgar or socinian Rationalism, the origin of the Gospels either to the apostles, to their disciples, or to well-informed friends of the Christian cause, and then to dispute concerning the degree of their credibility, or, still more strange, to make them declare things quite different from what they really do say? Is it not enough for the Christian religion that its doctrine is preserved in its purity, without there being any necessity to defend the authenticity of a number of narratives which have their origin in ideas eternally true, but which were framed by the evangelists only as a sort of body for those ideas? To give some reasons for his rejection of the Gospels as the works of the apostles, Strauss examines the external testimony generally adduced in support of their authenticity. This testimony he declares to be weak and in no way calculated to counterbalance the numerous internal proofs of their unauthenticity. Then, in order to re-assure those readers who might

\* An account of his opinions may be found in the different Prefaces to the *Life of Jesus*, vol. i. of the French translation by M. Littré, and especially in the Introduction.

consider his work of destruction incompatible with the sentiments of Christian piety, he declares, that he supposes the inventors of the Gospels to have believed all which they related, because they had heard these stories from numbers of people who made them their favourite topic of conversation, or because they had before them many small works in which the simple actions of the Saviour, or some of his precepts or parables, were recorded in an emphatic manner and adorned with miraculous circumstances. All these accounts tended to excite the admiration of readers, to touch their feelings, and to lead them to the practice of the virtues of which Jesus had given so beautiful an example. But how were they to be invested with an authority strong enough to lead to conviction and to compel obedience? It was found that the best means would be to represent them as the work of the apostles, so that they might for ever command the respect of Christians. In this way, within the century after the death of the apostles, were formed the canonical and a great part of the apocryphal Gospels, and it is only in consequence of circumstances quite independent of the will of the compilers that those bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are alone considered as canonical. If to this abstract of the arguments of Strauss we add that he treats as myths most of the facts which the Naturalists considered as impostures, and which the Rationalists of the school of Eichhorn and Paulus explained, by depriving them of their miraculous character and reducing them to very ordinary occurrences, we shall then be able to form an idea of all the contents of the *Life of Jesus*. It delighted all the secret or declared Deists still belonging to the Christian church; it justly alarmed all those whose hopes rest only on the promises of Christ; and it provoked the anger of the vulgar rationalists, who found their system designated as inconsistent, and without any scientific value.

At one time the Prussian government was inclined to put an end to the scandal by interdicting the entrance of the work into its dominions, believing that this measure would suffice to check its growing celebrity. Neander's lofty intelligence, however, had succeeded in preventing this step, and, in a subsequent edition, Strauss sincerely thanked him for it. The learned professor of Berlin gave it as his opinion, that the work of Strauss, though not profound, was written with much talent, and that throughout science predominated over and extinguished sentiment. That, in truth, the writer appeared to be guided by singular good faith, but that his mythical system did, nevertheless, undermine Christianity, and that, if it spread, would, it might be feared, destroy the existing Christian faith; that it would, notwithstanding, be a great mistake to interdict the work, since when once interdicted it could not be refuted,



and by such a measure it would acquire an undue importance. As the words of Neander were badly reported in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, he thought proper to publish them, together with an explanation, which was in fact a censure of Strauss's work. He subsequently criticised it in a *Life of Jesus*, which may be literally called the counterpart of that of Strauss. We may judge of its importance from these words written by Strauss himself in the preface to his third edition: "With De Wette's *Commentary* and Neander's *Life of Christ* before me, I have re-commenced the examination of the fourth Gospel (St. John's), and this renewed study of it has shaken in my mind the validity of my doubts respecting its authenticity, and the credence which it deserves; not that I am convinced that the fourth Gospel is authentic, but I am less strongly convinced that it is not so."\* Thus we see Strauss condemns his own system. For when a writer expresses himself in this way, he allows himself conquered, as does Strauss, in saying that he is not convinced of the unauthenticity of the fourth Gospel. We do not need the learning of a theological professor, to see that if the Gospel of John is admitted to be authentic, the whole mythical system falls to the ground; for does this Gospel contain anything diametrically opposed to the other three? Posterity will owe the deepest gratitude to him who, by the skilfulness and worthy tone of his criticism, drew forth this confession from Dr. Strauss, and at the same time proved that Christianity, which has vanquished so many enemies, can have nothing to fear from speculative philosophy. The new trial to which it has been subjected by Dr. Strauss has been the more severe because it did not consist of sharp witticisms, nor of polite sarcasm; but came from a conscientious man, possessed of learning, strength of mind, and, above all, of an iron consistency. It is true our feelings are wounded by the icy indifference with which he anatomizes what, as a whole, we have so much pleasure in admiring; and when we find that his emotion is not once excited by the contemplation of the mild and imposing person of Christ, we are saddened by a want of feeling which we can hardly attribute to science alone. The work of Strauss, though it may have seduced some minds which had never experienced a heartfelt Christian faith, can only have strengthened those who were wavering but still sincere.

It would be an endless task to mention all the works which followed the appearance of this *Life of Jesus*, and the articles concerning it in pe-

\* *Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. vi. See also Neander's *Erklärung in Beziehung auf einen Artikel der Allgem. Zeit. nebst dem auf höhere Veranlassung von ihm verfassten Gutachten über das buch des Dr. Strauss.* Berlin, 1836.



riodical reviews and journals. The most important among the first are those written against the work of Strauss by Neander, Tholuck, Hoffmann, Krabbe, Kuhn, and von Ammon, which, taken altogether, have not left unanswered one of his critical objections. We have already spoken of those of von Ammon and Neander, whose feeble side lies rather in what they leave unsaid, than in what they both express with so much talent. But their lucid explanations of certain facts apparently contradictory, especially those of Neander, seem to have made a happy impression even on Strauss himself. But Tholuck, Krabbe, and Hoffmann, took a more decided tone. They, less prudent than Neander, who would have been silent, had he not felt convinced of his superiority over his opponent, made no sort of concessions, and thus gave Strauss an opportunity of animadverting, with the bitterness which distinguishes his later works, on the too dogmatical tone of Tholuck's work.\* The *Life of Jesus*, by Kuhn, a Catholic professor of the University of Tübingen, bears the impress of unequivocal Supernaturalism. This is not surprising from a Catholic who could not take up the pen without resolving not to contradict, in any particular, either the received doctrine or any historical facts; but Professor Kuhn has displayed great learning in his scientific exposition, and we are grieved to find, that though five years have elapsed since the first part of his work appeared, the second has not yet been published for want of encouragement.†

We must also mention particularly the witty novelist of Sweden, Frederika Bremer, whose writings have become naturalised in Germany, where they are read with as much interest as in Sweden. This lady has written a little book, which we have read in the German translation,‡ and which is composed in a true womanly spirit, the pen being guided by the heart. She has found no difficulty in showing that every soul imbued with that love of God and men which is the first commandment of the Gospel, can easily give an answer to all the objections accumulated by Dr. Strauss, respecting the origin and formation of the evangelical books, and that thus the science of the heart is superior in religion to the science of the mind. In speaking of this work in the *New Gazette of Jena*,§ Baumgarten-Crusius said, that "such women ought not to be silent in the church." Here, at least,

\* Tholuck, *die Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte*, &c. Hamburg, 1837. Wilh. Hoffmann, *das Leben Jesu von Strauss, geprüft für Theolog. und Nicht-theol.* Stuttgart, 1836. Otto Krabbe, *Vorlesung, an d. Leben Jesu, für Theolog. und Nicht-theologen*. Hamburg, 1839.

† Johann Kuhn, *das Leben Jesu wissenschaftlich bearbeitet*, vol. i. Mayence, 1838.

‡ *Morgenwachen; einige Worte in Veranlassung*, &c. Hamburg, 1842.

§ 1842, No. 101.

we have one pure and popular voice, which may be a guide to learned theology in the confusion which prevails in its domain. Such works, continues he, produced by a mind inspired by faith, should outweigh a whole anti-Christian literature; if its voice is listened to, we may have many like it, which will announce the dawn of a clear day, and will bring light and joy in a period so darkened by the mists of error.\*

After speaking of a work unequalled in celebrity by any other of modern times, if, perhaps, we except Lamennais' sublime pamphlet, entitled *Paroles d'un Croyant*, it seems natural that we should have to mention some great mind that, penetrated by the spirit of Strauss, followed the same path. In fact, though Strauss had written nothing new, as he had only shown to what a deplorable condition Rationalism had reduced Christianity, yet, as soon as he showed the possibility of a new dogmatical construction by means of the philosophy of the absolute, some young minds applauded his attempt, and, becoming his fellow-workers, they formed the new Hegelian school, which we now see on the brink of rushing headlong into the gulfs of negation and the most refined Materialism. Their efforts, however, cannot be described until we have given an account of the doctrinal work by means of which Strauss vainly attempted to restore what he had destroyed by his *Life of Jesus*.

On the same philosophical grounds as were taken by Marheinecke, but aiming at a different end, for the sole reason that Strauss did not shrink from consequences which would have alarmed the Christian feelings of Marheinecke, the celebrated author of the *Life of Jesus* attempted to construct a Hegelian doctrinal system, as if in answer to the defiance of his opponents, who accused him of a tendency too exclusively destructive. There is this immense difference between the two disciples of Hegel,—that while Marheinecke endeavoured to explain the Lutheran doctrines by means of idealistic philosophy, Strauss wished to retain, not of Lutheranism merely, but of Christianity itself, only those parts

\* Among the articles in periodicals written against Strauss, the most remarkable are those of Schwcizer, Ullmann, and Julius Müller, in the *Studien und Kritiken*; of Weisse in the *Litterarische Unterhaltung*, 1836, No. 61-65; those of Paulus, in the literary sheet of the *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung*, 1835, No. 85-89, and in 1836, No. 27-32. An abstract of these articles, and of several others, is given in Zeller's pamphlet *Die Stimme der d. Kirche*. Zurich, 1837. We cannot pretend to give a decided opinion on the articles in French journals on this subject; but we cannot refrain from mentioning those by Edgard Quinet, in the *Revue des Deux mondes*, and by M. Coquerel, in the *Lien*, as being interesting and instructive to those who are desirous of understanding only the essential part of the question.

which agreed with his pre-conceived system. In the *Life of Jesus* he had made some undecided efforts to restore a Christ in religion after destroying by his criticism the Christ of history. He had affirmed that the Christians of the earlier centuries had clothed in an historic garb the image of the Messiah that dwelt in them. He spoke in this like the Hegelians, who assure us that the human mind had given, by a presentiment of their future philosophy, an historical form to the doctrines of Original Sin, of the Trinity, and of the God-man. Strauss confessed this to those who reproached him with this desertion to the camp of philosophy, while persisting in his belief that there are positive data for the history of Christianity.\* In his doctrinal work, especially, he undertook to show that when philosophy had once obtained the sovereignty, the Christ of Hegel would for ever supersede the evangelical Christ.

Strauss was born at Ludwigsburg, in Wurtemberg, in 1808. He studied theology at Tübingen, where he at first espoused somewhat immoderate Supernaturalism.† The perusal of the works of Hegel made him desirous of visiting Berlin, to converse respecting the philosophy of that master with some of his pupils. During his visit, which took place in 1831, a year after the death of Hegel, Strauss had occasion to attend some of Schleiermacher's lectures.‡

The logical connexion of the ideas of Strauss was directly opposed to the very conciliatory opinions of the restorer of doctrinal theology. Strauss returned to his native province with the firm resolve of abandoning every moderate path, and yet with a sincere desire of doing what he could to restore Christianity, which was, he saw, in a deplorable state of decay. Yet on what can his system rest, when he does not acknowledge the historical certainty of any of the facts on which all Christian systems of doctrine are founded? For, if Schleiermacher's definition of doctrine be correct, it is the science which shows fully the teachings of a Christian church at a given period. Strauss, then, ought to have given us a representation of what he considered to be the doctrine of the actual church, if he meant his work to conform to its title. But this does not stop our writer's progress: not only does he not show the doctrine of the actual church (he might have some trouble in finding out what that church is)—not only does he not follow the example of

\* See his *Streitschriften*, Part III.

† See an article in the *Freihafen*, a literary journal published at Altona, where we may see the different phases through which Strauss passed before arriving at Hegelianism.

‡ I do not understand what several critics mean by making me say here what I do not say. Strauss did visit Berlin *after* Hegel's death; but he conversed with some of that philosopher's adherents respecting their system.

the empirical and speculative rationalists, who found their explanations on philosophical principles calculated to throw light on those doctrines, —but he begins by effacing all which exists, and attempts to produce a system of doctrine in which some Christian expressions are retained in order that it may still be considered as a Christian system. He tells us that the time is come when it would be folly to attempt to rationalise the Bible anew, or to christianise speculative reason. The effect of such an attempt would be only to conceal the evil, instead of curing it. A change, therefore, is necessary, if we are to make any progress. We must, however, do Strauss the justice to say that his criticism is characterised by a frankness which reminds us of his *Life of Jesus*, and that he never attempts to conceal the force of an argument against himself. But though he does not omit to mention things unfavourable to his own side of the question, we must say that he does not show equal toleration towards individuals; and no speculative theologian in Germany can read certain passages of his writings without feeling annoyed by what he must consider to be foolish impertinence. After saying that a dogmatical system in our day should contain the different elements of thought which occupy the minds of men, in which alternate revelation and speculation, the Bible and the natural sciences, the beatitude of heaven and the riches of industry, he proceeds to attack the would-be friends of moderation, and defies them to engage public attention for one moment. “It is not,” says he, “every one who possesses the tact and perseverance with which Schleiermacher made such a mixture of Spinozism and Christianity, that it was impossible to distinguish the different elements. With many, the union of Christian faith and modern ideas exactly resembles the mixture of oil and water. They remain in unison only so long as they are shaken. Others, who have a certain degree of reputation, make, to use an image not unworthy the reality, a sort of highly-seasoned dish, in which the orthodox doctrine represents the meat, Schleiermacher’s doctrine the lard, and Hegel’s philosophy the seasoning. Lessing showed the greatest disgust for this mixture, and would have preferred ancient orthodoxy, which was, he said, at least consistent.” \*

“True conciliation,” says Strauss, “must henceforth consist of separation and selection. It cannot attain its end, *via sicca*. It must take place by fusion and fermentation, which may purify. The task will not be difficult, for since Christianity began to exist, parties have disputed in such a way that we have only to take the result of so many different opinions, and submit it to the purification of criticism.” Thus the true

\* In a letter to his brother, published in his correspondence.



criticism of doctrine is its history, and it must be acknowledged that Strauss treats this history, in the section entitled apologetic, with remarkable expository talent. He follows, step by step, what he terms the origin and development of each doctrine, then endeavours to enter into the spirit of the period when it was held in esteem, in order to show what worth it may have; and, finally, he describes its decline and the indifference with which it comes to be regarded. For this purpose he quotes the best authorities, viz., those theologians held in the highest esteem by all parties, and after thus giving a critical narrative of the fundamental ideas on which are generally supported all Christian doctrines, such as those of revelation, miracle, inspiration, prophecy, tradition, scripture, infallibility, commentary, religious perfectibility, sentiment, faith and knowledge, and the development of these in Christian history, he deduces from these premises the following consequences, for which he alone is responsible. "The mind," he says, "which gave the comprehension of these dogmas, has resumed it; for the mind being at first only in itself or internally more reasonable, has, for that very reason, been so only out of itself. It placed the reason which it had in itself as another individuality, before its own individuality, immediate, but not yet fathomed. All the spiritual depth exists in this way on the objective side; the subjective side is empty, or filled with material fallacy, which should receive its spiritual perfection and its destiny from the objective, and it exists by revelation. Revelation should manifest itself by external and objective signs, by the subject which exists apart from itself. It must especially make known its origin as proceeding from the absolute intelligence, by passing beyond the limits of the finite, or by prophecies; and its origin from absolute power, by surmounting the power of nature in miracles. It is necessary, then, that for coming generations revelation should be preserved in sacred writings; and that it may be certain that it is there preserved in its purity, it is necessary that those writings should be inspired by the author of the revelation. As all this is, as yet, only the objective side, in order that revelation may be a really comprehensible idea, one thing is essential—the mediation of the subjective which takes place by the interpretation of the Scriptures. By what is this interpretation to recognise the divinity of the revelation in question? By the miracles and prophecies which accompanied it. But how are we to know the truth of these miracles and prophecies? From the testimony of Scripture. Who shall affirm that that testimony is true? The Spirit of God which inspired it, and which cannot deceive. And who shall certify this inspiration? *The internal testimony of the Holy Spirit*, which, in reading Scripture, there recognises its own work. But



how can we feel assured that this internal evidence is given by the Holy Spirit, and not by some other and Evil Spirit? Here the thread of orthodox systems is broken; for instead of divine testimony in favour of revelation, human proofs are brought forward. . . . . But against these human proofs appear quite as many human doubts. The reality and credibility of the Scriptures are attacked. The possibility, if not of voluntary errors, at least of illusions, of corruption of historical truths, by legends or myths, naturally presents itself; Scripture no longer appears to be anything more than a collection of writings very dissimilar in their nature and value. The prophecies disappear before the absence of events, the miracles are explained by the mythical system, and what remains of them belongs to the domain of nature. Finally, in revelation, man recognises his own laws,—if not those of his reason, at least those of his feelings and his imagination,—and extending his hands towards this image of himself, he sees it disappear, in proportion as he considers himself internally.” \*

This language is sufficiently decided; yet, as the writer fears lest he should be misunderstood, he takes care to warn us that he writes only for the intelligent, the learned, and that the people have nothing to do with this enlightenment. The herd of believers require some authority, and they may as well be led by the ancient authority of revelation as by any other. I will quote the words of Strauss himself: “There is a gulf between the two classes of society, that is to say, between the learned and the unphilosophical, whether belonging to the higher or the lower classes, and this gulf will perhaps never be removed.” † The conclusion which Strauss draws from this is, that as the learned ought to allow the people quietly to enjoy their belief, the people should allow philosophers to think and express themselves in their own way. “And if the ultra-pious should succeed in excluding us from their church, we shall consider it an advantage. Attempts enough at false mediation have been made, nothing can lead us further except separation from oppositions.” ‡

Thus the intention of Dr. Strauss was not to form a new doctrinal system. He does not consider that necessary, since where there is no longer to be a church, a society of men united by the links of the same

\* *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, by F. Strauss, vol. i. § 22.

† *Hier ist eine Kluft zwischen zwei Chassen der menschlichen Gesellschaft, den Wissenden und dem Volke, das heisst den Nichtphilosophirenden der höhern wie der niedern Stände befestigt, die sich vielleicht niemals ausfüllen wird.*—(Ibid. p. 355.)

‡ These are free expressions, and yet one hundred and twenty theological students of Halle signed a petition to the King of Prussia, praying for the appointment of Dr. Strauss as philosophical professor.

faith and the same hopes, there cannot be instruction. What he wished was "to do for religious science what a merchant does who presents his balance sheet,"—to establish a criticism or critical researches to show all parties the possibility or impossibility of constructing a new doctrinal system. But, in the first case, when he says, "Let us abandon the question of a revelation to which not subjective criticism is opposed, but criticism, as accomplished objectively in the course of ages," and when he takes away from it a personal God, a God possessing attributes conceived in Him only by a pretended wisdom, such as goodness, knowledge, justice, whence logic had inferred connexions with the temporal and eternal existence of man,—we must not accuse him of these things; "he only gives utterance to the judgment already passed by history and the feelings of the period."

This new work of Strauss was contradicted by a great number of opponents; but not with the same distinction nor the same success as that which had attended the refutations of his *Life of Jesus*. From the conduct of some of his adversaries, however, it seemed that they should have found it more easy to triumph over their opponent when he presented himself openly and with no weapon save an axe with which he attempted to dig the tomb of all positive religion. But they did not remember all the destructive power of the human mind, and how difficult it is to erect anything by the side of ruins, unless God himself lays the corner-stone of the edifice. It has been said that writers of the highest merit refrained from entering the lists on this occasion, because they had exhausted the subject on the publication of the *Life of Jesus*, and the numerous answers which it drew forth. Was it not rather because to refute such a work, it was not enough to recal the argument of prescription; but if positive religion is true, it should, like philosophy, have a synthesis, and derive its articles of belief from a principle so evident that it may defy all the pretensions of incredulity? We must, however, mention the names of Köster, Kahnis, Sartorius, Boden, Hanne, Fischer, Kratander, and some others, whose united efforts possess indisputable value.\*

\* *Die christliche Glaubenslehre des Dr. Strauss auf dem Standpunkte evangelischer Prediger krit.*, by F. Köster. Hanover, 1841. *Die moderne Wissenschaft des Dr. Strauss und der Glaube unserer Kirche*, by K. A. Kahnis. Berlin, 1842. *Die christliche Glaubenslehre im Gegensatze der modernen Gewissenstheorie*, by E. Sartorius. *Zur Beurtheilung der christl. Glaubenslehre des Dr. Strauss*, by A. Boden. Frankfort, 1842. *Der moderne Nihilismus und die Strauss Glaubenslehre im Verhältniss zur christlichen Religion*, by Dr. J. W. Hanne. Bielefeld, 1842. *Die speculative Dogmatik von Dr. Strauss, geprüft von Dr. Fischer, Professor der Philos. und Univers. Tübingen*. 2 small volumes. Tübingen, 1841. *Anti-Strauss, ernstes Zeugniß für die christl. Wahrheit wider die a. und n. Unglaubenslehre*, by Kratander. Stuttgart, 1841.

Köster confesses that if knowledge were the only thing to be considered in religion, the Hegelian method of Strauss would lead to satisfactory results; but we must consider faith also, whose rights cannot be disputed by science, and which rejects the argumentative process. But he ought to have proved, that faith, which is a presentiment of the soul for truth, is endowed with the same capacity as the mind to establish facts in the domain of supra-sensible truths. By using faith only as a negative aim, instead of showing its affirmative power, he gave encouragement and weapons to his adversary. Then Kahnis came forward. Though this was not his first dispute with the Hegelians, he appears to have wanted experience and sound knowledge. Had he possessed these, he would have expressed himself with more tact and less grandiloquence, and would have known what place in the history of religious disputation is to be assigned to the Socinians and Arminians, by whom the epithet of *ignorant* is certainly undeserved. Dr. Sartorius conducted the controversy in a very different manner. He knew that to defend Christianity it is necessary to appeal to the human conscience, and he endeavoured to show that the erroneous doctrines of Strauss respecting the personality of God, His spiritual nature, on the existence of sin, and the necessity of such a redemption as the Scripture announces to us, are opposed to the claims of the moral wants of our nature. On these grounds, he tells us that the surest means to make Strauss perceive the truth of what his criticism has demolished, would be to induce him to try that criticism on himself.\* Boden attempts to show that the learning of Strauss is only false learning, by which we must not be dazzled, and that if his blows strike ecclesiastical doctrine, they glance aside harmless from biblical doctrine. And here Boden treats of a matter which he does not understand, viz., the destiny of the church in this world, which he compares to any other human institution, which has nothing permanent in its nature.

Dr. Hanne, a zealous disciple of Schleiermacher, does not deny that Strauss possesses the talents requisite for a good writer, nor that he understands the questions raised by his audacity; but he endeavours to silence him and his two followers, Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer, by compelling them to confess that their principles are powerless for the creation of anything, or rather that if they do not destroy Christianity, to which they have sworn mortal hatred, it will be a certain proof that their principles must be destroyed by faith. He desires not to be con-

\* Dr. Sartorius, known by an important work on the person and mission of Jesus (Hamburg, 1841), is a true supernaturalist; but he has this peculiarity—that he can see no safety for Christianity save in the Lutheran views respecting the Lord's Supper.

founded with the orthodoxists (a new term), with the pietists, and with the pectoral theologians (*pectoral-Theologen*), who are immoderately warm against the incredulity or anti-Christianity of Strauss, whose great merits he willingly allows; but he is equally anxious not to receive the as little desirable title of Hegelian, for, says he, I will not relinquish my belief in a personal God, in a Saviour of the world, in a future life, notwithstanding the outcries of modern critics, who treat these truths as superstition, servitude, scholasticism, jesuitism. But does not justice require that you should not do to others what you fear for yourself? and since you will meet your Hegelian adversaries only on the ground of discussion, it would be well if you acted in the same way towards those who extend the sphere of Christian faith more widely than you do. And then by what right can you consider as worthless, doctrines which others think have been taught by the Saviour whom we venerate, when Strauss and his friends show you that your faith in a personal God is so illusory, when you think of His infinity, that even Schleiermacher has abandoned the idea? \* And why should you dispute with men who ascribe more power, and even more reality, to an idea, than you do to a fact, viz., the temporal appearance of Christ, which, as a fact, is open to objections, while the idea, when once comprehended, becomes indelibly fixed in the mind, and coeval with it? Strauss, having become pantheistical by a logical necessity, has gained a position whence he will never be dislodged by your mixed theories, as he calls them. You will never obtain a hold on his system until you succeed in proposing to the conscience of the writer one of those interrogatories which shall compel it to ask for mercy. Then the soul accepts the truth before understanding it, because it feels the necessity of it, and perceives its efficacy. And when we feel the efficacy of a remedy, are we not very near to understanding its nature? Though not a sworn disciple of Schelling or Hegel, Dr. Fischer fears not to encounter his adversary on the grounds of speculation. After endeavouring to show that the kernel of Christian faith, which must be distinguished from the husk which surrounds it, is quite comprehensible to the human understanding, he proceeds to prove much more satisfactorily that the history and criticism of doctrine are two distinct things. Now, Strauss has exhibited only the negative side of the development of doctrine, and has entirely neglected the positive part of it. We can, says Fischer, judge of the true development of anything only by a tho-

\* Dr. Hanne is the author of a pamphlet entitled *Schleiermacher, the Genius of Germany*. It is an inflated panegyric, which corresponds with another pamphlet, *Socrates, the Genius of Humanity*. In these two works the enthusiasm of the writer predominates over his other good qualities.



rough understanding of the principle of that thing, and the constant development which follows is an essentially positive process. If we were to form an opinion of Kratander's work from Hengstenberg's eulogium, or Zeller's criticism of it, we should quite misunderstand the tendency of the *Anti-Strauss*. It is, in fact, the work of a man of faith, whose zeal would be better understood by a Christian audience than among critics. Yet the book, though in its form liable to attack, penetrates, like that of Sartorius, into the depths of the question, which is one of morality and conscience rather than of learning; and it proves, with some degree of success, that modern criticism has claims on our respect only so far as it infuses into society the principles of life which are wanting there. For life and truth appear together, and Christianity is truth only because to all ages may be applied these words of Christ: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). \*

\* The following Reply to Strauss appeared in this country:—*Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss's Leben Jesu*; consisting of Essays, original and translated, in Defence of Christianity; collected and composed by the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D. 8vo, cloth, 12s. The various portions of this work may be had separately, as follow:—'Strauss, Hegel, and their Opinions,' by the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D.; 1s. 6d. 'A Reply to Strauss's Life of Jesus,' from the French of Prof. Quinet and the Rev. Pasteur A. Coquerel; 2s. 'The Credibility of the Evangelical History Illustrated,' from the German of Dr. A. Tholuck; 1s. 6d. 'The Theory of Myths, in its application to the Gospel History, Examined and Confuted,' by Dr. Julius Müller; 1s. 6d. 'Illustrations of the Moral Argument for the Credibility of the Gospels,' by the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D.; 3s. 6d. 'The Fallacy of the Mythical Theory of Dr. Strauss, Illustrated from the History of Martin Luther and from actual Mohammedan Myths of the Life of Jesus Christ;' 1s. 6d. 'Extracts from Neander's *Leben Jesu*, selected and abridged, with reference to Strauss's *Leben Jesu*;' 2s.—London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

FOLLOWERS OF DR. STRAUSS AND THE YOUNG HEGELIAN SCHOOL—  
CONRADI, BRUNO BAUER, FEUERBACH, RUGE—LAST ATTACK ON  
THE AUTHENTICITY AND DIVINITY OF THE GOSPELS—DE WETTE,  
GFRÖRER, WILCKE, WEISSE, B. BAUER—PROBABILIA OF BRET-  
SCHNEIDER, B. BAUER, LÜTZELBERGER—PRESENT CONDITION  
OF EXEGETICAL LABOURS IN GERMANY RELATIVE TO THE NEW  
TESTAMENT.

AFTER the great sensation caused by the opinions of Strauss in Germany, it was very natural that the writer, who united such profound learning and severe and conscientious criticism, should find himself speedily surrounded by a large number of devoted followers; yet, we must repeat it, Strauss brought no new materials for the erection of the edifice which modern philosophy would raise for the glory of the human mind. By his powerful arguments and his ingenious criticism he reinforced and provided a rallying point for those disciples of Hegel who have not wished to apply their master's philosophy to every form of government, but have associated it with the liberal and democratic movement of our day, and who endeavour to gain ground as much by the boldness and liveliness of their attacks as by their outrageous pretensions of establishing a heaven upon earth, and of altogether renouncing the ideas of a personal God and of an individual immortality in the human race.

If I were to follow strict chronological order, I ought first to mention those who followed Strauss in the domain of exegesis, since the *Life of Jesus* belongs to that province; but I will first speak of two writers who pursued the same path in doctrine, and one of whom has already far outstripped his leader. The first of these is a pastor in the Duchy of Nassau of the name of Conradi, who has been for some years advantageously known in the literary world, as the author of a work on religious philosophy.\* This work, independently of its Hegelian character,

\* *Ueber Selbstbewusstsein und Offenbarung.* Mayence, 1831,—a work which Marheinecke terms a “phenomenon of the religious sentiment.”

openly showed a tendency to deviate from historical Christianity respecting the ideas of the Gospel on a future life. He has since published a formal criticism of Christian doctrines,\* which takes for its text the Apostles' Creed, in order to give to those parishioners of Conradi, who might be scandalized at it, a patent pledge of orthodoxy. But in reality the aim of the work, as the author himself confesses, is to subject to criticism every part of Christian doctrine, in order to deduce from it the doubt in which faith is found ;† to reconcile the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed with the philosophy of Hegel, and to propound a theory respecting the Trinity and the work of Christ, which has nothing in common with any of the ecclesiastical doctrines. For example, he says : God, as the Father, exists neither as the foundation and cause, nor as a person nor absolute substance for Himself, but as the absolute substance personified. What must be the feelings of the poor citizens with whom Conradi prays every Sunday, when told that our Father in Heaven, that good Father who welcomes the returning prodigal, who tells us that He desires not the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live,—what, I say, must be their feelings when told that this good and affectionate Father must be considered as the absolute substance personified ?‡ In the same spirit our author establishes the eternal generation of the Son, though he by no means proves, what a philosophy ought to prove, how this eternal generation can agree with a *personal* eternal substance, and how this generating power was exhausted by the birth of one son. By wishing to be wise, says an esteemed writer, we become foolish ; yet the philosophy which undertakes to explain everything ought to silence every contradiction raised by the human mind. This, however, Conradi does not do, in constructing from his principles a doctrinal system, which should complete that of Strauss by furnishing it with a positive side, but where we find neither that writer's extended knowledge, nor Marheinecke's profundity. The most important attack made by an avowed follower of Strauss, not only on the facts of Christian history or on its doctrines, but on what have always been considered its essential ideas, was that made by Feuerbach. He, openly and with all the frankness of one who feels sure of success, attempts to deprive man of everything which makes him superior to mere material beings, while pretending only to remove the bandage of

\* *Kritik der christlichen Dogmen, nach Anleitung der apostolischen Symbole*, von Casimir Conradi. Berlin, 1841.

† “den Zweifel, in welchem der Glaube einbegriffen ist.”

‡ “. . . Gott als Vater existire weder als Grund und Ursache, noch als Person, noch als die absolute Substanz für sich . . . . sondern als die absolute Substanz als Persongesetz.”—(*Kritik*, p. 34.)

error from his eyes. Conradi, he says, attacks openly only the doctrines *invented* by the Church, but he *respects* the Gospel; Strauss attacks the Gospel, but respects religion: but he (Feuerbach) attacks every religious idea, and, others would add, every moral idea, which he considers only as the production of a fantastic imagination, which we have allowed to fascinate us too long. Here he far outstrips the philosophy of Hegel from which he started, because, if the *dead proceed quickly*, logic proceeds much more quickly, when entire freedom from hypocrisy causes it to speak directly to the point. Thus Feuerbach does not consider religion as the divine consciousness of self, but as a dialectical illusion of the mind. If you would understand it thoroughly, you have only to study man, and you will see it in all its phases, its variations, and its capricious fantasies. You must no longer call religious science theology, but must use the term anthropology. That word comprehends all the history, past and present, of religious ideas. The New Testament, which speaks of a future life, is less advanced than the Old, which spoke only of man on this earth; whatever may be said to the contrary, we are more under the influence of the Old Testament than of the New, for men marry, and by that action protest against Christianity, which makes man, deprived of sense, the *beau ideal* of a future life. In one word, Christianity may be characterised as hypocrisy, because it teaches only what is not done and never will be done. Things like these, and others even worse, are to be found in Feuerbach's book on the nature of Christianity,\* and also in several articles in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, a periodical well known to be compiled by the young school of Hegel, the great apostles of which are its author, Ruge, and Bruno Bauer.† We must not, however, imagine that they reject Christianity, so that they cannot make use of any part of it: Feuerbach is not so unjust. As love is everything in his estimation (this would be true did he use the word love in another sense), it follows that love is the central point of the only possible religion, and Christianity is for once right in teaching us that love has made man into a god. Feuerbach, also, maintains as an essential point of doctrine the supernatural conception of Jesus, as well as the immaculate conception of Mary,‡ and he declares that if any one deserves to be admitted into the family of gods, Mary has by her maternity (apart from marriage) a much better claim than the Holy Spirit, which is only a poetical personification, to be considered, though

\* *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. Leipzig, 1841.

† *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, 1842, No. 19-22.—For details respecting Ruge and his work, and the materialistic tendencies of the young Hegelians in general, see the *Life of Spinoza*, p. 345, seq.

‡ P. 60 and 390 of the *Wesen des Christenthums*.

a woman, as the third person in the Trinity (*dritte und zwar weibliche Person in der göttlichen Familie*). For marriage itself, though sanctified, it is true, by the ancient law, is nothing better than a sin under the new dispensation, or, at least, has no religious but only a moral (political) signification.\* The only means, therefore, by which Christianity can recover its ancient influence will be to reject faith as an insignificant virtue, and to proclaim love as the only law of humanity. When Christianity made love subordinate to faith, the love of faith has changed into an extravagant faith (*betrunkener Glaube*). Let it be declared that love is without faith, and faith without love, and this belief will be able to regenerate the world.† Though Feuerbach, in his earlier works,‡ spoke with some respect of the Christian religion, yet there might be found in them traces of the opinions and purposes which he openly avowed in the book from which we have been quoting, a book written with facility, and a certain degree of talent, but in an unphilosophical manner. And in his history of modern philosophy, he still reverences in Christ, the *logos* or pure and universal reason, and hence even that holy nature of humanity which had been lost sight of in the Pagan world in consequence of the distinctions of nations, each of which thought itself the only centre of humanity,—that which, in Pagan philosophy, had been only an idea, became flesh in Christ, that is to say, a concrete nature and reality, and consequently the entire consciousness of the divine in man.§ But he modified his tone in the history of the philosophy of Leibnitz, where he dwelt upon his favourite distinction between the theory and the practice of religion. Practice he considered to belong to philosophers, while theory serves to employ the leisure of theologians. In his *Pierre Bayle*, his ill-will towards religious faith was much more manifest, and he vented it in an especial manner in his treatise on philosophy and revelation, which the editors of the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* refused to insert as a whole, though it had been written expressly for that periodical. But in his last work, on the nature of Christianity, he arranged systematically all his prejudices against a religion which he did not understand. The reader will be

\* *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 180, 182, 223.

† *Das Wesen*, &c., p. 360-363.

‡ *Ueber Philosophie und Christenthum*, in *Bez. a. d. der hegels. philosophie*. Mannheim, 1830 (see p. iv. of the Preface, and p. 9 of the work itself); *Geschichte der Leibnitz. Philosophie*. Ansbach, 1837. p. 120; *Pierre Bayle, nach seinen Verdienste für die Geschichte* . . . . Ansbach, 1838. p. 32. He had, however, published an anonymous pamphlet against the immortality of the soul, which had excited the great indignation of the school of Hegel, as did that of Richter of Magdeburg, *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit*. Nuremberg, 1830.

§ *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*. Ansbach, 1835. p. 2, seqq.



surprised to learn that Feuerbach began his career as *privat-docent*, with a decided resolution to maintain the principles of Supernaturalism. This is said to be the case, and we know that Strauss, in his early life, professed the same principles. Is it not possible that they may return, if not exactly to the point whence they set out, at least to a position where they may enjoy more peace of mind?\*

The same may be said of Bruno Bauer, whose celebrity equals that of Feuerbach and Strauss. He, too, began his literary career with a zeal for Supernaturalism, which, it is said, alarmed his friends. He took up his position at the extreme verge of Hegelianism, by the side of Marheinecke and Rosenkranz, and warmly defended against Vatke the supernatural revelation of the account of the creation in Genesis, and the authenticity of the Pentateuch. What is still more wonderful, he opposed Strauss on the subject of the miraculous birth of Christ, and thus gave cause to Professor Michelet to say, in his *History of Modern Philosophy*, that this young man was going to abandon them, and join the followers of Hengstenberg. Strauss himself, in his doctrinal work, mentions him as one of those zealous believers who used the weapons of philosophy to repel the attacks made in the *Leben Jesu*.† And now his greatest ambition seems to be, that it may be said that Strauss and Feuerbach sink into insignificance before him, since they have avoided several points over which his criticism has triumphed. Hengstenberg remarks, that, in fact, he has not only outstripped his new friends, but that he has gone as far as he can go, since there is nothing left for him to destroy; and where genius is wanting, it is vain to invoke it.‡ We will quote his own words, from the preface to the most important of his works: "It will perhaps be thought that we have here carried negation too far, and in too rash a manner; but let it be remembered that the truly

\* As I have before said, the most interesting particulars respecting the religious life of Strauss are to be found in the *Freihafen*, a journal published by Theodore Mundt. An account of Feuerbach is given in the *Literary Annals*, first year, Hamburg, 1839. We there read—"When he left the Gymnasium, F. read with assiduity the works of St. Augustine, and under their inspiration studied theology at Heidelberg and Berlin; but he soon became a disciple of the Hegelian philosophy, and resolved to devote himself entirely to speculative science. On leaving Berlin, he attempted to establish himself as *privat-docent* at Erlangen; and it is to be remarked, that the few pupils that he obtained have all taken a pietistic turn (in France we should say that they all became pious). He was anxious to become a professor, but not having patience to wait for his appointment, he retired to the country residence of a relation, where he has since lived devoted to his studies."

† *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, vol. i. p. 2.

‡ *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, June 9th, 1842.



positive can become apparent only when the negation is serious and general. The corruption arising from the letter cannot be arrested until it is put into motion by the spirit confident in its purpose, and this motion is directed and produced by the substance of the corruption. . . . . I hope to prove that the most destructive criticism is the only thing to show the creative power of Jesus and of his principles." \*

But before entering into the details of the recent attack on the Gospels, I must show how that attack originated. Many writers, who owe their celebrity to works of real utility, though not altogether agreeing with Strauss, made to him concessions in many ways. This was done in the greatest degree by De Wette, Gfrörer, Weisse, and Wilcke. After asserting in his *Commentary*† that most of the researches of Strauss are only negative, and the consequences which he draws wanting in clearness, De Wette equally deprecates the timid manner in which those who have embraced the child-like faith (*kindlichen Glauben*) of the first centuries attempt to retain it, and this he considers a proof of their inability to advance with the progress of time. The Christian faith, he adds, does not rest originally and essentially on the Bible, but on the revelation by Christ, a revelation which itself rests on certain facts, independently even of the testimony of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are, it is true, the normal line by which we ought to measure and rectify the objects of our belief; but the rude empiricism, and the unyielding manner in which the Bible has hitherto been treated, both in its historical and dogmatical relations, and by which it has been made into a kind of legal code to be interpreted literally, have debased its character, and it is high time to abolish these evils. Thus Christianity, as a source of life, will not perish; its history and the conception of its doctrine, which are hieroglyphics written by the finger of God, will always undergo new and more liberal interpretations, and religious society will receive them, we hope, not with the reason which has so often profaned them, but as proceeding from the feeling of a soul, holy, creative, exalted, and full of sacred sentiments.

We might easily point out many things in these remarks which show sad indecision and a truly deplorable want of clearness. In the volumes which followed this declaration, the indecision of a mind very unfit for scepticism becomes apparent. I shall here mention only the volume

\* *Kritik der evangelisch. Geschichte der Synoptiker*. Leipzig, 1841, 2 vols.

† This refers to the exegetical manual for the understanding of the New Testament, the first volume of which was then being published. The work is entitled *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch*, &c. Leipzig, 1836. Five volumes have appeared.

containing the commentary on St. John, dedicated to the author's learned friend, Lücke, of Göttingen. As Lücke is himself the author of a commentary on the same Gospel, in which his supernaturalistic tendency is quite apparent, notwithstanding the reserve and too hasty decisions in which, as a speculative theologian, he indulges, De Wette takes care to warn his friend that he shall frequently disagree with him respecting this Gospel, which Lücke prefers to the others, and he begs him to read attentively those passages wherein they differ in opinion. We do not so much blame De Wette for his opposition on certain points to received opinions, but we would know exactly what he thinks—we would have a frank exposition of his system, and would see him put off the cloak of a despairing scepticism. For example, in the fourth chapter of his introduction, he takes care to enumerate exactly all the arguments against the authenticity, and even the truth, of this Gospel; and he shows weakness, great weakness, when he recounts the proofs to the contrary. The hypothesis which he advances, that John may have written at a late period of life, and at a time when *faith and the sentiments which governed him* may have overcome, in the determination of the writer, his desire to write from memory, is not only unfounded but injurious to the moral character of the apostle. The same indecision prevails in his account of the miracles; and it is not without surprise that we find him, after making the greatest concessions to Strauss, coldly saying of the expression *pure fiction*, by which that writer characterises the raising of Lazarus, that such a judgment was undoubtedly too hasty. In a commentary which pretends to explain everything, and which certainly shows great learning in all its parts, the reader might have expected to learn the author's opinion respecting an event of which Spinoza said, "that if he could believe it, he would immediately embrace the Christian faith."\* What can we say when we find him first inclined to consider as mythical certain facts, such as the marriage of Cana, and to oppose Strauss on this point, and then declaring against myths in general, because, he says, the authenticity of the fourth Gospel is not yet entirely disproved, because the form of the accounts is much more subjective than legendary (an observation which seems to have made the deepest impression on Strauss), and because they abound in ideas worthy of Jesus, notwithstanding the obscurity in which they are enveloped? † This confusion of light and darkness, occasioned by the want of fixedness in the ideas of the great theologian, always leaves his reader in suspense, and causes us to wish for the time when De Wette, forget-

\* Bayle, Article *Spinoza*.

† *Kurzgefasstes ex. Handbuch*, Part III.

ting part of his past life, shall enter on a new and not less glorious career.

Another learned man, who rendered homage, if not to the system of Strauss, at least to its negative results, was Gfrörer, professor and librarian of Stuttgart. There, long surrounded by the rabbinical folios in which that library abounds, he thought that their shadowy lucubrations had enlightened him as to the true origin of Christianity. Like the author of the *Life of Jesus*, Gfrörer endeavours to prove the non-historical, or at least apocryphal, character of the three first Gospels, commonly called the synoptical, but he defends the authenticity of the fourth against Strauss, and explains it by the natural method of Paulus.

In the third part of his work, entitled *Holiness and Truth*, he even professes to heal the wounds inflicted on Christianity in the second part, *Sacred Legends*. In that second part, he attempts to show the complete falseness of the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, not seeing that, if the Gospel of John and the Pauline epistles are admitted to be authentic, it is easy, even apart from other proofs, to re-establish the three synoptical Gospels.\* The principal aim of Gfrörer's work is to show that, except the doctrine of the advent of the Messiah, Christianity has no doctrine peculiar to itself, that it has borrowed all from Judaism, for which it is scarcely more than another name.

The librarian Gfrörer has studied and understood the works of the rabbis much better than the Gospels, to which his mind and heart alike are foreign. Supposing his hypothesis correct, supposing that he had satisfactorily proved the identity of Christianity and Judaism, of what use could such a discovery be? What advantage would it be to men to be shown that, obeying the same precepts, they might as well call themselves Jews as Christians? Did these conclusions entitle Gfrörer to take so high a tone, to insult those who think differently from himself, and from the pedestal of the Talmud to declare that he has at last removed the *gutta serena* from the eye of the Christian world? These pretensions are the more ill-founded, from the fact that the theories advanced as new are, in reality, anything but original. Before the librarian of Stuttgart had given his attention to the subject, Schöttgen, a writer of well-known science and erudition, had gone over the same ground, comparing all the doctrines of the rabbis with those of our Gospels; but he differs from Gfrörer, in proving from this inquiry the indisputable superiority of the Christian faith.† Thus Gfrörer has not

\* See *Geschichte des Uehestenthums*, divided into several parts, each under a different title.

† Ch. Schöttgen, *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmud. in N. Test.* Dresden, 1733-42. 2 vols. in 4to.

only failed to discover the truth, but he has also added to the long list of errors produced by modern Rationalism. The theological world might reasonably have expected more from a writer whose early works, though containing the germ of his recent errors, gave promise of a brighter future.\*

Willeke, in the work in which he thought proper to answer Strauss, maintains that the four Gospels were formed by apostolic tradition, and were preceded by fragmentary accounts written in Syriac and Aramaic for the Christians of Palestine; that the first and fourth Gospels are not to be attributed either to Matthew or John; that the latter apostle may perhaps have supplied the foundation of his Gospel, but that it owes its present form, in all probability, to Apollon. Willeke agrees with Strauss in thinking that not one of the Gospels belongs wholly to one apostle; but he differs from him in supposing that we have in the Gospels the pure tradition of John, Peter, Paul, and Matthew. After supposing oral tradition to be their principal source, the author passes to the question, *Do the Gospels contain myths or history?* In order to decide this question, he defines the myth as an idea represented by an image, and relating either to the philosophy of antiquity, or to the origin of a people. "The philosophical myth," he says, "is pure invention; the other may have a foundation in history." That neither of these definitions is applicable to the Gospels, Willeke proves, by developing the idea of the myth, and its results; and then he shows, in his way, how oral tradition alone could be the source of the Gospels, and ought to be considered as a good pledge of their historical faith. He proposes this difficulty, "Do the Evangelists relate histories or myths? If they relate myths, they are not the simple and ignorant men they were thought to be, but men of the greatest wisdom and sagacity, and yet, for all that, impostors!" He adds, that at a later period some legends were interwoven with the Gospels, but did not essentially alter them. He regards as legendary, the annunciation, the miraculous birth, the temptations of Jesus, the transfiguration, and the ascension. Our author, however, allows the reality of the miracles; and to defend the historical portion of the Gospels against Strauss, he draws a picture of the age of Jesus, from which he concludes that the lofty individuality of Christ, and his pure and spiritual doctrine, can be nothing else than historical. He adds, "We may invent myths, conceive heroic characters, but the divine character of the Saviour is above

\* His work entitled *Philo und die alexandrinische Theologie*, though of merit as a learned work, tends to prove that Christianity derives its origin from the Rabbinical schools of Palestine and from the school of Alexandria.



all human imagination, it is a truth in history." Wilke afterwards gives the following opinion of the *Life of Jesus*: "The work of Strauss shows knowledge, facility, strength of mind, and an iron consistency; his manner of presenting things is clear and concise; the style is pure and forcible; the tone almost always noble, the bearing serious. But the work maintains what is not true, and this want of truth produces much that is false. Thus we find in it no distinction between the myth and the legend, no enlargement on the richness of ideas in the evangelical doctrine, no indications of the holy grandeur of Christ: it is only a collection of the contradictions which the writer thinks he can discover in the evangelical narratives. A learning which loved the truth, and was not the result of predetermined opinion, would, from its very nature, have appreciated historical individuality. The speculation into which Strauss plunges is a magical ring, without beginning or end. He has created for himself adversaries, such as there might have been among the orthodox of the seventeenth century, and he lends them his own arguments. We find him using the Gospel of John, in which he generally places little faith, sometimes as a history, sometimes as a mythical narrative, as it suits his own convenience. If that is a mythical mode of acting, we might just as well, by the same means, make a myth of the work of Strauss." \*

We have spoken of Weisse's hypothesis respecting the formation of the evangelical writings; we ought to have added, that he gave the preference to that of Mark over the other synoptical Gospels, because it offers more evidence of its authenticity. One year previous, the pastor Wilke, not satisfied with the same conjecture, had advanced the supposition that it was the primitive Gospel of which so much had been said, and which had furnished the principal materials for the formation of the two others that bear the names of Matthew and Luke.† This theory of Weisse and Wilke was taken up by Bruno Bauer, who makes it the basis of his criticism of the Gospels. With this writer, however, the Gospel of Mark obtained the preference, not on account of the proofs alleged by tradition, for which he cares little, but because he thought that it would assist him in the contest for which he was preparing; it was because he found it more simple in its narratives; more free from the marvellous, and bearing fewer traces than the others, of what the subsequent wants of the church caused to be added to the

\* *Tradition und Mythe*. Leipzig, 1837.

† See the *Urevangelist* (Leipzig, 1837), by Christ. Gottlob. Wilke, pastor of Hermannsdorf, who must not be confounded with the preceding Wilke, pastor at Rothenburg on the Saale.



original accounts. He does not, however, admit that Mark's Gospel possesses all the characteristics of authenticity. Far from so doing, Bauer, on this point, attacks Weisse and Wilke, who had supported that Gospel, in opposition to Strauss. But he displays most strength in exposing the arguments advanced by Weisse and Wilke, when they assert, in a somewhat arbitrary manner, that the narratives of Mark and Matthew ought to be the pillars of Hercules to criticism, and when, with all the authority given by his growing celebrity, he answers, by a simple negation, the conclusion which they draw, that in those Gospels we can recognise a positive reality, and not merely an artistic composition.

But who, then, are we to consider as the author of these Gospels? The church, we are told—the church, which found it necessary to support itself on something sensible for its extension and perpetuation—the church, which owes its existence to itself alone, since those Jews who were completely astonished by their fellow-countryman, Jesus, felt a desire to manifest publicly what their souls could no longer contain, and resolved to introduce into the conscience of the human race this extension of their idea, and to reduce it to its most simple expression. The moment which created that expression gave birth to the church.\* In here admitting the existence of Christ, Bruno Bauer contradicts his own system, which tends to prove that the Christian conscience created itself. It was hardly worth while to designate Strauss as orthodox because he recognises here and there some historical traces in the sacred books, and because he does not establish unreservedly the subjective idea as the foundation of history. This contradiction may show the vanity of the prevailing idea of the work, which considers an effect without a cause—that is to say, a church forming itself by the nature of things, and creating for itself in the second century, books which should support its pretensions; though the criticism of Bauer shows, nevertheless, that these very books teach us nothing certain respecting Jesus, save that he was an eminent personage, without our knowing how he was so, and that he accomplished an immense work (*ungeheures Werk*), we know not how.

Bruno Bauer thus takes as his first principle the contradictions in the synoptical Gospels, nor can he agree even with Mark, who appears to be better informed than the others, and thus he excludes every supposition of mythical operation. He begins with Strauss, the inconsistency of whose system he points out in order the better to strengthen his negative consequences, and then he applies to Wilke to confirm his supposition that the authors did not in composing follow the dictates of their

\* *Kritik*, vol. i. p. xiv. ; vol. ii. p. 108 ; see also p. 409.

consciences. But, as the time for calling things by their right names has passed away, Bauer does not by any means imagine that the compilers of the Gospels, whoever they were, wished to impose; for the philosophy of Hegel, he says, explains very well those hallucinations of the human conscience which tend to advance the progress of humanity.\*

\* *Kritik der Synoptiker*, p. 80. After quoting this work of Bauer's, we need hardly do more than mention the names of pamphlets, of which he published a great number. First there appeared the "*Trumpet of the last Judgment on Hegel the Atheist, and Antichrist*, which he gives as an *ultimatum*, and in which, after many sarcasms on his opponents, and much praise of himself, he endeavours to show the agreement between Hegel and Feuerbach. But the frivolous tone and the grossness of his sarcasms disgusted even his friends. The same may be said of his *Teachings of Hegel on Religion and Art, from the point of View of Faith*, which is a worthy companion to the *Trumpet*, and obtained for him from the *Jahrbücher*, the name of a professional scandal-monger. We must not omit to mention the great movement throughout Prussia, caused by the discussion of the question, whether the author of so many works, avowedly anti-Christian, might, as a licentiate of theology, teach his new opinions in a Christian University. We have seen a work containing the consultations of all the Universities in the Prussian dominions respecting this question, and any one wishing to write on the trifling of theologians, would find here ample materials for very afflicting considerations. The University of Berlin declares that the work of Bauer is anti-Christian in its tendency, and, consequently, the faculty of theology requests that his license as a teacher may be taken away, and that *another place may be given him*. Marheinecke, as we have seen, gave a separate vote, and pleaded the cause of unlimited liberty. He consents that Bauer shall be deprived of a theological chair, only on condition that he shall be appointed philosophical professor. What a confusion of ideas! Has not the philosophy of our days become theological? Bonn votes with Berlin, and gives a more detailed opinion, proving, by very just quotations, that in depriving the author of these works of the liberty of teaching in a Christian institution, they should act conformably to his own spirit. (See principally, pp.\*59-61, of the *Gutachten der evangelischen theologisch. Facultäten*, &c. Berlin, 1842.) Breslau also votes with Berlin, but it is a pity that an infirmity, duly mentioned, prevented Dr. Schulz from voting. Professor Middeldorff there voted separately, and said, that since it had been thought proper to make him a licentiate, he ought to be allowed to continue teaching. At Greifswald, Schirmer and Finelius say, that Bauer does not exceed the limits of Christianity, though *he errs in the details*; while their colleagues, Vogt and Kosegarten, express a wish that free inquiry may not be confounded with unlimited liberty in teaching. Halle declares that, as Bauer is opposed only to the ecclesiastical doctrines, his place ought not to be taken from him, and the rather so, because his book is too frivolous to produce any bad consequences, and it would only be brought into repute by the persecution of its author. Königsberg and some others say that the work cannot be properly judged of until the appearance of the third volume, and that in any case Bauer cannot be deprived of his license, because if his book does contain some things contrary to Christianity, it also contains some agreeable to its spirit. *The Church ought to possess in its bosom, arms for all kinds of attack*. All this is very poor; but it is a necessary consequence of the posi-

Not only did Bauer attack the synoptical Gospels, in attempting to show their perpetual contradictions, and in pointing out ideas or expressions which could not have contemporaries of Christ for their authors; he also adopted the opinion of Strauss, that a decisive contest cannot take place unless we previously disprove the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, which has, by the traditions of eighteen centuries, been attributed to the Apostle John. "This is henceforth the great question for us," said Strauss, in a private conversation with Edgard Quinet; and the observation was just, because, if the authenticity of the Gospel of John is once proved beyond a doubt, who could seriously dispute the authority of the other Gospels, on the ground of mere internal arguments? But if, by any possibility, it could be proved that the writers living immediately after the apostles, as Irenæus, Justin, Papias, and perhaps Ignatius, Barnabas, and Polycarpus, did not know what they were doing in quoting this evangelist, or that in a closer examination of its contents we could find no sign indicative of its being the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved, then we must confess that our position is no longer tenable, and we must retreat before our more enlightened adversary. But as impartial spectators of the contest, who wish not to describe it for the benefit of any party or coterie, we may be permitted to hope that the decision will be in favour of the ancient faith, which we believe to be seriously threatened, though as yet by no means in a condition to yield up its arms.\*

tion in which the church placed itself by refusing a better constitution. Here and there, however, there appeared some one to contradict this strange manner of regarding liberty of instruction. The works which caused the greatest sensation were those of Dr. Gruppe, who, however, pleaded against Bauer the cause of the State rather than of the religious community, which has much greater reason to watch over a question of such vital importance to itself. (*B. Bauer und die academische Lehrfreiheit*. Berlin, 1842.) The author shows very well that as Bauer has voluntarily left the Christian church, his dismissal from a theological chair is a consequence of his own act. Dr. Gruppe has carried on the contest with Bauer and his officious protectors in the Universities, in a new work entitled *Lehrfreiheit und Pressenfug*, (Berlin, 1843,) which he concludes with these words, taken from a cabinet order: "The more desirous I am to grant liberty of speech to all who show loyal, frank, and noble sentiments, and to remove, as far as possible, all limits from the field of publicity, the more necessary is it to show severity to those who employ the weapons of lying and seduction, so that liberty of speech may not be deprived of its use and its blessings, by the abuse that may be made of it." We must, in justice, mention the pamphlet of a brother of Bauer's—*Bruno Bauer and his Adversaries*, Leipzig, 1842, which has been praised only by the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*.

\* For historical testimony in favour of the authenticity of John, see principally the *Introductions to the New Testament*, by Credner, Neudecker, Guericke,

Until the end of the eighteenth century, if we except the obscure sect of the Alogians, who attribute the compilation of this Gospel to Cerinthus, on account of doctrinal prejudices which kept them out of the pale of the church, no one had ever questioned its authenticity. The Englishman Evanson was the first to express doubts on the subject :\* these doubts were soon taken up by the rationalists Eckermann, Horst, and J. E. C. Schmidt, and afterwards by Vogel and Cludius.† As yet, however, no regular attack was made on the authenticity of the Gospel : the word *logos* was the only subject of dispute. It was asked whether this word were not of Platonic origin ; and from induction after induction the conclusion was drawn that a writer of Alexandria only could have used it in reference to Christ. To this dispute the history of theology owes a number of dissertations still to be read in the journals edited by Schmidt, Henke, Stäudlin, and more particularly one by Ballenstedt, which has given rise to so many others of the same kind.‡ Some others, studying the question in a purely scientific light, thought that they found in certain parts of the narrative, indications which might give rise to the supposition that John was the author but not the compiler. This opinion was entertained first by von Ammon and Rettig, and afterwards by Weisse.§ But such an hypothesis is inconsistent with the tone and aim of the whole Gospel ; it is inconsistent with the first epistle of the same apostle, which bears so striking a relation

and especially the work published by L. Kirchofer, under the title *Collection of Sources for the History of the New Testament down to Jerome*, first and second parts, Zurich, 1843.

\* *The Dissonance of the four generally received Evangelists, and the Evidence of their respective authenticity Examined.* Ipswich, 1792.

† Eckermann expressed them in his *Theologische Beiträge*, v. p. 2, year 1796, and afterwards in his *Erklärung aller Stellen des N. T.* Kiel, 1837. He was answered by Münscher, Störr, and Süsskind. Vogel, *der Evangelist. Johannes und seine Ausleger vor dem jüngsten Gericht*, 1801. Cludius, *Ursicht des Christenthums nebst Untersuchungen über einige Bücher des N. Test.* Altona, 1808.

‡ *Philo und Johannes, oder fortgesetzte Anwendung des Philo zur Interp. der Johannischen Schriften.* Göttingen, 1812.

§ See Rettig's *Ephemerides of Giessen*, 1824, No. 1 and 3. Rettig, professor at Zurich, died in 1836, scarcely thirty-eight years old. He would have been one of the purest supporters of enlightened Supernaturalism, if Death had permitted him to realise vast projects which would have obliterated the memory of slight tributes paid to Rationalism, while he was only a tutor at the University of Giessen. If this is not sufficiently apparent from his writings, which are full of warmth and full of truly liberal ideas (and pure Christianity is truly liberal), I think it is satisfactorily proved by these words, uttered by him three weeks before his death : " My friend," said he, with an expressive pressure of the hand, " my friend, remember that no one is a rationalist when on the point of death." ||



to the Gospel, both in its style and contents. Hypotheses, however, cost nothing to those who are resolved at any price to abandon the beaten track.\* At length Bretschneider came forward, and he, with all that artifice of words, which he uses even when employing the language of the ancient Romans, pointed out what he called the *probabilities* of the unauthenticity of the fourth Gospel. He endeavoured to prove that neither the apostle nor any other Jewish Christian could have been the author, but that it was the work of some converted Gentile, who probably about the middle of the second century undertook its compilation in order to silence the enemies of Christ and the apostles. This theory will explain how it is that this Gospel passes over in silence many circumstances which we find in the other Evangelists, but which were not necessary to lead the Gentiles to a knowledge of the Eternal word.† It is only by internal evidence that Bretschneider attempts to disprove the authenticity of the fourth Gospel. As to the historical testimony, he contents himself with saying that it has not sufficient weight, that it wants the necessary condition of antiquity, and that it does not by any means outweigh the arguments adduced against it.‡

Dr. Paulus did not altogether reject Bretschneider's probabilities, but the full admission of them did not enter into his system of natural interpretation. If he had admitted them, he would, by so doing, have virtually confessed that all his manœuvres to explain the miracles of the fourth Gospel had been employed uselessly. He made known his sentiments in such a way that they might conciliate both the common opinion and that of the new system of criticism. He declared that between the synoptical Gospels and that of John there existed a real difference: but he would not hear of any peculiar ideas entertained by John, different from those which he might have held at the beginning of his apostolic career, particularly respecting the meaning of the word *logos*.

\* See the work already quoted, *Die Evangelische Kirche, krit. und phil. bearbeitet*. Leipzig, 1838. I may be permitted to make one remark. This Gospel does differ in form from the synoptical Gospels. The mind of John did receive the doctrine of Jesus in another manner—that doctrine he has represented in the colours of the philosophy of his day; but we must not forget that Christ could not have confined himself to one style of speaking, and that the apostle John lived the life of the patriarchs, that he may have studied much, and may have learned much from his opponents, and that these circumstances in no way weakened the divine assistance which strengthened his mind.

† *Probabilia, de Evang. et Epist. Joannis apostoli, indole et origine*. Leipzig, 1820.

‡ *Probabilia*, pp. 2, 31, 32 and 220. The most remarkable of the many works written in answer to Bretschneider are indisputably those of Schott, Paré, Fleck, and Stein. This is acknowledged by Bretschneider himself.



He accounted for the difference of tone and of local colouring by supposing, not that an Egyptian or any one else compiled the Gospel in the second century, but that a disciple of the apostle himself, also named John, who perfectly understood the ideas of his beloved master, was the author, and expressed himself in the style of the apostle.\*

The result of this controversy was not in favour of the unauthenticity of the Gospel, though De Wette continued to declare that it could not be considered as the work of a fisherman of the Lake of Galilee, and that it even was superior to a mind cultivated and initiated into the Alexandrine philosophy.† Bretschneider himself, after watching impartially the dispute which he had provoked, declared that he had received new light, and was convinced of the authenticity of the Gospel.‡ Doubts, however, have been re-awakened in some minds, and Strauss, who had unceremoniously erased from the Canon all the four Gospels, applied his attention particularly to undermine that one which was more directly opposed to his mythical system. I have quoted his declaration in the third edition of his work; it renders unnecessary any account of his arguments, which are, however, nearly the same as those of Bretschneider. I cannot refrain from remarking that, if this retraction of Strauss is less formal than that of Bretschneider, it must perhaps be attributed to the indecision of De Wette's commentary, and, dare I say so, to the hesitation of Neander himself in some parts of his *Life of Jesus*, which Strauss could not regard as dictated by science and religious faith.

\* A. Neander, after recounting the strongest objections, makes this remark: "Let us yield without prejudice to the impression made by the Sermon on the Mount, and then let us ask ourselves whether a genius so sublime, so profound, and so powerful, employed in the course of his ministry only one style of speech. A mind which extended its power, not only over simple and practical characters, but also over inquiring and profound geniuses, such as Paul, must also, on occasion, have given to its own elements a similar direction. As Christianity soon attracted, from different places, and from the most opposite directions, minds of the most diverse cultivation, and displayed an irresistible power, whether in the ideal or the reality of spiritual life, so the action proceeding from the internal nature of Christianity leads us to the idea of an union of so many elements and different modes of expression in the person of its founder." The same author afterwards proves, by examples, that the difference between the manner in which John relates the discourses of Jesus and that in which the other Gospels relate them, has been exaggerated.—(Neander's *Leben Jesu*, &c.)

† See his *Einleitung* and his *Commentary*, in the volume containing the four Gospels.

‡ Tzschirner's *Magazine for Christian Preachers*, vol. ii. 154. Bretschneider added in his *Dogmatik*, vol. i. 292, that his *Probabilia* had been intended only to rouse the attention of the learned, and to give them an opportunity of strengthening the foundations of this Gospel.

We must commend Dr. Strauss for openly declaring that his book, whose merit lay in its strict unity, has necessarily lost that character by the concessions which he has been compelled to make to criticism.\*

The controversy has thus been renewed since the publication of Strauss's work, and it is again a matter of dispute whether that Gospel which has hitherto appeared to have the strongest proofs of authenticity, must fall before the criticism which questions those proofs. Strauss, like Bretschneider, after raising the storm, was led, by reading De Wette and Neander, to be alarmed by his own audacity, and to confess his inability to prove his first assertions. But among his opponents we find Weisse, whom we know from his opinions respecting the primitive Gospel of Mark, and who endeavoured to add credit to the synoptical Gospels, and particularly that of Mark, at the expense of the fourth. He admits, however, that the ancients of the church of Ephesus may very possibly have collected the instructions given them by the Apostle John, and have made them public under the form of a life of Jesus, and that, therefore, it may be reasonable to attribute a certain authority to this second-hand work.† But two writers soon appeared who, rejecting all these concessions, offered to undeceive even the most persevering in their belief in the authenticity of John's Gospel. These were Bruno Bauer‡ and Lützelberger,§ who used different means for the same end. Lützelberger does not quit the ground of history, and, assuming John to be the author of the Gospel that bears his name, endeavours to show, by proving the resemblance between what he teaches, and doctrines posterior to his age, how great this historical mystification is. Bruno Bauer makes use of the Gospel itself, without having recourse to tradition, to prove that its contents belong entirely to a period at which the apostle could never have lived. Bauer endeavours especially to show the difference between the christology of John and that of the synoptical Gospels. In fact, he says, in the one we find "a Christ in the infinity of his historical self-consciousness; in the other, we find only a Christ in the limited reflection of a member of a church which succeeded the church of the synoptical Gospels." And then what kind of personage is the hero of the fourth Gospel? He is pride personified. Ruge, in his journal, gives the best commentary on this idea of his co-editor, Bauer, when he says that vanity and its consequent defects are

\* *Das Leben Jesu*, vol. i. Preface to the third edition.

† Fromman has refuted this hypothesis in the Review *Theol. Studien und Kritiken*, 1840. Part IV.

‡ *Kritik der evangel. Geschichte des Johannes*. Bremen, 1840.

§ *Die kirchliche Tradition über den Apost. Johannes u. seine Schriften in ihrer Grundlosigkeit dargestellt*. Leipzig, 1840.

the most evident characteristics of this Gospel in which Jesus is continually speaking of his celestial origin, and is angry when any one *appears* to recal him to more modest ideas.\*

Lützelberger attributes the Gospel of John and his first epistle to a Samaritan of the second century. To arrive at this conclusion, he examines the testimony of tradition, and from it he learns, not only that *all* the writings bearing the name of John are unauthentic, but also that it is a great error to suppose that that apostle ever visited Asia Minor. Lützelberger adds, that if Ephesus had been so fortunate as to possess such an apostle, we should have more numerous and animated accounts of him. It is to Greater Asia, that is Mesopotamia, Armenia, &c., that we must attribute the origin of the fourth Gospel, and most probably Edessa was the town which produced it. It was most likely written by a Christian philosopher of that district, who, about the second century, wished to refute doctrines which he considered false, and which were propagated in his country by Pagans and Jews. That this philosopher was a Samaritan, is proved by his predilection for Samaria, and his ill-concealed aversion for the Jews. Such is the spirit of this work, in which rectitude of intention does not conceal the imperfection of the system, whose tendency is to see in the Gospels only the production of the imagination of the compilers, and in the essence of the Christian faith (which we suppose the author means by the expression *Hauptsache*), only a dream of its founder.†

This audacious negative criticism has been replied to by another criticism, which has shown what might be done by faith united to science, if there were in Germany a rallying point, a church which should protect efforts, inspire them with its own life, and sanction them by its powerful and enlightened authority. But, in the interval before this renovation, we must mention the isolated efforts, not only of some journals conducted by Harless, Tholuck, Hengstenberg, and even Bretschneider, but also of several well-armed writers, who with one hand repelled the attack, and with the other repaired boldly, and with some success, the numerous breaches made by the enemy in the last wall which remained to shelter,

\* *Hallische Literatur-Zeitung* (since changed into the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*). 1841. No. 115.

† To prevent any mistakes, Lützelberger has confirmed these opinions by a new publication, *What Jesus was and wished*. Nürnberg, 1842. It is remarkable that Strauss, in his *Dogmatik*, prophesied that a man must soon appear who would fully demonstrate the unauthenticity of the fourth Gospel, and it has appeared in print that the manuscript of Lützelberger had been communicated to him some time before. We must mention, to the honour of Lützelberger, that before writing against evangelical Christianity he left the ecclesiastical order.

not merely one particular church, Catholic or Protestant, but the most essential and universally received doctrines of Christianity. First stands the work of Schweizer, which, inspired as it was by the eclecticism of the author, could be only a work of compromise.\* Schweizer distinguishes two parts in the Gospel of John, a part properly belonging to it, or, at least, compiled by an apostolical witness, and a part which has been interpolated. This second part consists, besides the 21st chapter, of the account of the marriage of Cana, of the cure at Capernaum, and of the miracle of the loaves. These accounts he considers as an exaggerated appreciation of the idea of miracle, and as forming too great a contrast to the rest of the Gospel, which is far from being imbued, like the others, with the Galilean spirit, and which rests on an indestructible historical basis. We must pass over the different lives of Jesus already quoted; among others those of Tholuck and Neander, which have proved the authenticity of narratives in the synoptical as well as in the fourth Gospel; and the third edition of Lücke's commentary, which contains a complete dissertation on the late debates raised by Strauss, where the author, with his usual sagacity, has shown that all alleged by modern criticism against the authenticity or integrity of the fourth Gospel, is not of a very serious nature, though he does not conceal any of the difficulties sometimes presented by traditional evidence.† But superior to them in the extent of his work, stands Ebrard,‡ who, with one certain glance at the efforts of the

\* *Das Evangelium Joh. nach seinem innern Werth*, &c. Leipzig, 1841.

† *Commentar über das Evang. Joh.* &c. 3rd edit. Bonn, 1840. Part I. Ch. i. contains, in 160 pages, this dissertation—a model of its kind—on the authenticity, integrity and canonicity of the fourth Gospel. Lücke, in this third edition, particularly endeavours to refute Schweizer's hypothesis, yet they both belong to the same school.

‡ Aug. Ebrard, *Wissenschaftl. Kritik der evangel. Geschichte*. This is a compendium of all pending questions relative to criticism, with solutions of them in a Christian spirit, and fitted to enlighten negative criticism. It appeared in three parts, forming an enormous volume of 1,112 pages. Frankfort-on-Maine, 1842. Neither the nature of our work, nor our necessary limits, will permit us to give a complete analysis of contemporary works on exegesis. But in the hope that if it is made known in France it may excite a desire, in some minds, to cultivate a portion of the vast field of theology or religious philosophy, we will mention Guerike's *Introduction to the New Testament*. This work, if we set aside the author's mania of seeing nothing true, nothing perfect, save in the old Lutheran church, presents a complete exposition of the actual situation of exegetical science relative to the New Testament, and is an arsenal where the defenders of the faith will find arms to defend the authenticity of all the books of the New Covenant.—(*Historisch.-critische Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. Leipzig, 1843.)

enemy, appreciated their whole bearing, characterised their fatal tendency, and with a complete knowledge of the subject, separated the straw from the good grain. In a profound examination of the contents of the fourth Gospel, he opposes De Wette, and shows how a Galilean fisherman, whose mental culture confounds the learned professor of Basle, may really have composed the work bearing his name; and in this agreeing with Credner, he shows the necessity of such wisdom with men so learned as those of Ephesus; he then examines into the value of tradition, appreciates one after another all the kinds of evidence, and arming himself with the concessions made by his adversaries, their inconsistencies, and the profound historical science which he himself appears to possess, he refutes the assertions of the eclectic Weisse, Schenkel, and Schweizer, throws light on the badly-expressed doubts of some, and shows the sad aberrations of an entirely negative criticism. This he does not only for one Gospel, but for all four, the harmony of which he skilfully displays, and shows it to be a necessary consequence of their authenticity.

We must now cast a glance behind, and must not be content with merely deploring the ravages made on the symbols of the Christian faith by the school of modern Hegelianism, of which Strauss, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer, are the brightest stars; but we must also present a picture of the results produced by all shades of Rationalism in the domain of religious criticism.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## CONSEQUENCES OF EMPIRICAL, SPECULATIVE AND GNOSTICAL RATIONALISM IN THE DOMAIN OF CHRISTIAN FAITH—SUMMARY OF OPINIONS ENUNCIATED BY DIFFERENT SHADES OF RATIONALISM.

It is a popular maxim, and one consecrated by the high authority of the Gospel itself, that we may judge of the goodness of a tree by its fruits. May we not apply this maxim to Rationalism, and decide that a system presenting itself to the people with the sole aim of purifying the Christian religion and of strengthening its sentiments in the human mind, but which has corrupted it in its source, and has misrepresented it in every branch of its teaching—that a system which has not been content with pulling every part of it to pieces, but which has derided it to such a degree as to make it promise to adopt entirely different precepts, entirely different ideas, though still calling itself the same religion—that such a system, I say, must be condemned by every sincere and intelligent mind, and can no longer seduce any one? When philosophy wished to take the place of the religion of the twelve Galilean fishermen, it was more sincere; it avowed its projects, apparently because it felt more secure of attaining its end. Was it, then, from a feeling of its weakness that Rationalism, which could not be ignorant of the point whither the exigencies of its principles would conduct it, preferred to follow a route which should conceal the lowness of its intentions? Vainly do some of its adepts, terrified at their own work, now attempt to avert its consequences. The ruins of the edifice which they have destroyed are still smoking; each may contemplate them at his ease, and form an idea of the culpable boldness of the destroyers. The Reformation left, if not churches flourishing in light and piety, at least churches which, like those of the first centuries, still placed their glory in the cross of Jesus Christ—churches where the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion were placed under the safeguard of the oaths of the pastors, and which, above all, preserved pure and intact that Bible in whose name the Reformation was effected, and for which several generations of Protestants would willingly have sacrificed their lives. But Rationalism came, and effaced

from that Bible every one of its doctrines, and then, when it found itself sinking beneath the power of accusations from this same Bible, it changed its mode of attack; it discontinued the tiresome work of making deceptions come from that book which claims to speak nothing but the truth, and it began to dispute its right of teaching that truth. It began the work anew, very skilfully dividing the labour among the numerous adepts which it had enrolled under its flag; and from the first page of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse, it caused to disappear from the sacred books, by means of the word *reason*, all the traces there left by the Deity in inspiring their authors. The Bible sank to the level of a pendant to Homer or Ovid, a deposit of the mythology of the Jews and the early Christians. What remained for Rationalism to do after accomplishing this work of destruction? Any one who understands logic in the least will answer, that if Rationalism had been sincere, it would have said to Philosophy, "You have been victorious: here are the keys of the temple out of which we have driven the god at your instigation: it is for you to reign therein, unless you will, as a reward for my efforts, honour my theologians with the title of Pontiffs of Philosophy;"—or Rationalism would have turned to those of its ancient adherents who had refused to follow its adventurous career, and would have conjured them to labour to restore to honour among the people, principles whose salutary influence it no longer denied. The application of this alternative would have been wise; but do parties ever return from their errors? The men who compose them may do so, but parties themselves never do; they will prefer an obscure death to a recantation which would re-establish them in public esteem. But as we know that the writers of the present day, who entertain the different shades of rationalistic opinion, are most of them men of high moral and scientific worth, we may presume that the fertility of their labours will soon induce many of them to destroy their present objects of adoration, and to adore what they now consider to be fit only for destruction.

Have the consequences been the same on the side of gnostic Rationalism?—by which we mean, that system which relies on the exclusive faculty of perception or understanding, to effect a reconciliation of ideas between philosophy and Christian theology. If we can be satisfied with words instead of realities, we may fancy that the theologians of the old school of Schelling, of Jacobi, and of Hegel, have made unparalleled efforts to restore Christian Lutheranism, duly interred by the empirics, to a life which should not have to fear a second approach of death. But if we weigh the value of words, if we compare the ideas conveyed under these newly-adopted expressions, with the ideas con-

stantly received during the long period of Christian ages, we shall find that these restorers of ancient truth are only men of eminent talents and perfect good faith, chosen by Providence to prepare a part of the materials to be used by others when the period for the renovation of religious doctrine shall arrive. That renovation is foreseen by every great mind, but it cannot take place until society itself shall have undergone the change of constitution which we must expect.

Gnosticism, under whatever name it may in different circumstances appear, always proceeds from this principle, that the source of religious faith should be either in science, in man alone, or in the world, independently of the divine word, which aims at the production of true faith only by obedience to the instructions of a mediating God-man, the teacher of true knowledge.\* This speculative separation of Christian doctrine from the domain of historical truth could not fail to introduce confusion into that doctrine. Thus, though gnosticism admits several fundamental points of the symbolical books, it differs from them on others which even empirical Rationalism had passed over, and thus destroys with one hand the edifice which it raises with the other. It can be proved that this separation of Christian principles from religious truth tends to take away from the ideas of revelation, of redemption, and of justification, the meaning always attached to them by the church. It has, moreover, cast the veil of the most deplorable obscurity over the so-called natural truths of religion, such as the existence of God and the nature of his attributes, the existence of the soul and the nature of its individuality.

God is a being existing for himself, said the ancient theologians, and all which exists, exists only by him. But different is the being which exists necessarily, and different are the beings which could never have received existence; for if we admit a God, we must admit him free to create or not to create, perfectly independent of the laws of development to which he submitted ourselves, when he had once resolved on the Creation. Gnostic Rationalism attacked first the proofs which demonstrate the existence of this God, one, free and independent, and declared them insufficient to prove the legitimacy of their pretensions.† Then confounding all the attributes of the Deity, it at last mingled up with the

\* See some excellent reflections on this subject, and on the state of the church in general, in Sack's work, *Christliche Polemik*. 1838. That the pitiless logic of the author should displease all parties, was to be expected; but still the book shows the inability of all the religious ideas of the period to direct the human mind.

† See Daub, *Theologomena*, § 34, p. 111, seq.; and Marheinecke, *Die Grundlehren der christlichen Dogmatik*, p. 121.

idea of a God all that it had met with on its way, soul and body, spirit and matter, the individual and the species, man and the universe. Thus, Fichte's school may be accused of idealistic Materialism, because it gives to religious ideas only a subjective value, and contradicts their objective reality; that of Schelling may be charged with materialistic Atheism, because it asserts the identity of the world with God; and that of Hegel with materialistic Idealism, because, according to it, God would know Himself only in the history of the human mind. And how many more anti-scriptural consequences have ensued from this first corruption of the idea of God? The liberty of man, his relation to God, the nature of his own being, that is to say, its personality and immortality, have all been sacrificed to a multitude of new ideas which are Christian only in name. Let us first examine into the gnostical opinions respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and faith in the Son of God as the Redeemer of the World. I will afterwards give an account of those concerning man's position in eternity.

Lessing taught, that God, reflecting from eternity on His own perfections, created from eternity a being perfect like Himself, who might be named the Son, and that the bond which unites them is the Holy Spirit.\* Here, therefore, the three names by which the Christian Trinity is designated can only be considered as thoughts of God, to which the language of man gives a personal reality. Daub and his friends considered the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as being merely expressions for the different operations of the Deity. I have already mentioned that Schleiermacher admitted no Holy Ghost except the spirit which animates the spiritual society of Christians. The opinions of De Wette, Daub, and Marheinecke, were as far from being orthodox.†

The empirical, philosophical and socinian rationalists have shown less hesitation, and have adopted the simple idea of Deism respecting God. We may, perhaps, here remark, with Bretschneider, that in all these philosophical definitions, there reigns an arbitrary principle, by which we might admit a duality or quadrality in God just as well as a trinity.‡ Or must we frankly avow, with Hase, that we should admit as a principle that the ancient doctrine is not only above reason, but that it is also contrary to it, and is, consequently, inadmissible?§

Thus speculative Rationalism, being distinct from vulgar Rationalism,

\* *Das Christenthum der Vernunft*, in his posthumous works. Berlin, 1787.

† *Ueber Religion und Theologie*, p. 237, 270. *Einleitung in das Stud. der Christ. Dogmatik*, p. 65. *Die Grundlehren*, &c., p. 120.

‡ *Handbuch der Dogmatik*.

§ *Dogmatik*, p. 640.



represents neither biblical Christianity, nor the doctrines of any church ; it is a mixture of Christian and Pagan terms, which express, in a confused manner, profound or superficial ideas, according as we preserve the ancient meaning of the words, or fritter it away in vapours and fantastic images.

The great, the fundamental error of all these systems, is their attempts to change religious faith into science, when reason and religion teach us that the view of faith will never change, until we enter into a higher world. When we speak of faith as the last degree of the religious idea and as absolute knowledge, we can only do so relatively to the termination of all things for us in the tomb. But unmindful of this fact, gnostical Rationalism, though asserting that the human mind is God, and that he in whom speculative philosophy is brought nearest to perfection has a good claim to the title of God, since, in his mind, God has arrived at the highest degree of self-knowledge, though making these audacious assertions, it nevertheless affirms that the human mind is eternal only in its generality, and by no means in its individuality. We have seen what the God of this philosophy is,—a being without independence or liberty, not even possessing the plenitude of knowledge ; for that it would be necessary that a perfect mind should have existed, and every one knows that in very many of the aspirants to divinity God is far from arriving at self-consciousness. But the speculative theologians have shown by an argumentative process the possibility that God may by degrees arrive at this self-consciousness ; but when this possibility shall have become a reality, they show by reversing the same process of argument, that humanity, instead of remaining at this sublime height, will begin to descend from it, and that thus the work will all have to be commenced again. This they attempt to prove by bringing forward as evidence the alternations of enlightenment and ignorance in history. Rosenkranz, one of the most learned and moderate disciples of Hegel, says, “ I consider that the fundamental fault of Strauss’s system is, that he recognises the subjectivity of the substance only by the infinite number of subjects in the human race. Christ is not a collective predicate, allotted to him by the spirit of humanity,—he is its concrete unity. The essence of the idea contains, also, the absoluteness of this individual appearance. The idea of seeing Christ in humanity can be fully understood only when we admit the absolute humanisation of God, with which it is perfectly consistent.”\*

If empirical Rationalism reduced Christ to the level of a sage of

\* Rosenkranz, *Critique on Schleiermacher’s Dogmatik*, p. 17, Preface.—Compare Strauss, *Streitschriften*, vol. i. part 3. p. 57.



Judea, who should accomplish a better work than the sages of Greece and Rome, gnostical Rationalism appears to have been as unsuccessful in its attempts to re-establish the ancient doctrine of Christ's divinity, as in its efforts to do the same for the still greater mystery of the Trinity. According to De Wette, the doctrine of Christ's divinity can be considered only as an æsthetical idea. The pious Christian sees in Jesus the living divinity; he goes no further in his inquiry, and never asks if that is possible which his feelings tell him to be real. If we retain this doctrine, it is only as belonging to æsthetics, and as a beautiful and expressive image, not as an invention of an exalted imagination, but as the result of an historically religious experience.\*

The idea of a God made man, says Marheinecke, is the same as that of a man whose consciousness of God does not differ essentially from that which God has of Himself. This doctrine rests, then, on the idea which we form of the religion which comes from God, in so much that it has had such an influence over humanity as to become a part of it, that God Himself—that is to say, God who comes from God—that is, the Son of God—or, what is the same thing, the knowledge of God by God or religion—that this divine nature has become for humanity another nature.†

Fichte said, that if Jesus were to return to the world, we may reasonably suppose that he would be much better pleased to find Christianity ruling in the hearts of men, than to find his merits extolled or not extolled by Christians. This, he adds, is the least which we could expect from such a man, who during his life never sought his own glory.‡

We know that Hegel made a distinction between the historical and the ideal Christ, as also did Marheinecke and Strauss, especially the latter, who considered our Lord merely as divinity manifesting itself in humanity.§

When the person of Christ ceased to be viewed in a scriptural light, obscurity was necessarily cast over his chief work. Gnostical Rationalism cannot boast of any superiority to the vulgar system in the definitions which it gives of the death of Christ, and of the reconciliation effected by it between heaven and earth. These facts are not, indeed, considered as they were by Eberhardt, Löffler, Gabler, L. Nitzsch, Wegscheider and Krug, in the light of empty ideas, by means of which the

\* De Wette, *Ueber Religion und Theologie*, p. 257.

† *Grundlehren*, p. 233. See also Schleiermacher, *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, ii. 193.

‡ See his *Life*, published by his son, p. 173.

§ *Leben Jesu*, the last paragraphs; and *die Streitschriften*, vol. i. part 3. p. 76.

apostles accommodated themselves to the received opinions, nor were they regarded, as by the Kantists, as mere allegories; but De Wette and his school looked on the expiatory death of Christ as a symbol of the resignation and reconciliation of all differences in the domain of religious sentiment.\* With the Hegelians, on the contrary, we see "the visible fact of the eternal process of the divine life, which, penetrating into the finite, remains divine." Christ, said Hegel, died for all, and that means that in him all are dead. This is an action in the divine nature, which took place in God himself. God can receive satisfaction only from Himself. This death is love itself, shown in an action of God, and it is the reconciliation of it. We contemplate in it the absolute. It is the identity of the divine and human.† The incarnation of the Son, begotten from the beginning of all things, is the reconciliation of the finite with the infinite, of that which has been created with the principle of existence, of the temporal with the eternal. The Son of God made man, departs in his death from the sphere of the finite to return into the sphere of the infinite, as a spirit still acting in the finite, and eternally united with God.‡

Schleiermacher says on this subject,—“We may call Christ an expiatory victim in this sense, that on one side he represents by his dignity a model of human perfection, and on the other side our identity with him; God sees and appreciates in him alone the generality of believers.”§ De Wette maintains that the doctrine of reconciliation by the sufferings and death of Jesus can be only an æsthetical religious symbol, which represents and therefore preserves the religious feeling of resignation with which we ought to humble ourselves before God, or the reconciliation of the religious sentiment put into action in history.|| This change of the received opinions respecting the person of Christ and his redeeming work, was a necessary consequence of the gnostical ideas on the fundamental points of the inspiration and revelation of Scripture. On these subjects, gnosticism has quietly submitted to the dictates of vulgar Rationalism, which had asserted by the mouth of Röhr that Protestantism could not exist together with faith in the inspiration of Scripture.¶ De Wette, in fact, sees in the minds of the apostles only

\* De Wette, *De morte Christ.*, &c. Berlin, 1813. See also *Religion und Theologie*, 254; and *Dogmatik*, § 73, a, b.

† Hegel, *Religion Philosophie*, vol. ii. p. 253.

‡ Usteri, *Doctrine of the Apostle Paul*, p. 133.

§ *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, ii. § 100-105.

|| *Dogmatik der lutheranische Kirche*, p. 53; and *Religion und Theologie*, p. 254.

¶ See Röhr's *Confession of Faith*, p. 50-70.

a divine presentiment (consciousness) of writing only the truth :\* and Schleiermacher attributes the veracity of the apostles to their perfect union with Christ, and considers their writings only as the first link of the long chain of doctrinal teachings which should appear in the bosom of the church, and which would all rest on that faith in Christ found in the apostolic writings.† Thus we see that if one of the phases of Rationalism considers the Bible as the work of ignorant men, the gnostics pay respect to it only when it consents to speak their language.

The gnostical or speculative theologians have repeatedly confounded, in their explanations, the ideas of revelation, of redemption, and of justification. After thoroughly examining all which they have said on this subject, it amounts to this, that the divine and human are united in an intimate manner in Jesus, and that in this new direction given to humanity, religion will constantly receive further development, until it raises man to the highest degree of religious sentiment, or makes him understand scientifically all within the sphere of religion.‡ Schleiermacher himself rejects the ancient idea of revelation as impossible, and sees in it only an impulse of the Divinity that develops itself constantly with new strength.§

Gnosticism has not been less destructive, in speaking of the soul, its nature and immortality. In these questions, in fact, it has gone beyond vulgar Rationalism, and all its professors have more or less adhered to Schleiermacher's assertion in his *Reden*, that it is a vice to believe ourselves immortal in the sense of an individual life. The soul, in the opinion of speculative theologians, is only a portion of that Absolute, in which it ought to be absorbed, "though continuing to live," as they add, in order not to shock common readers. This cannot surprise any one. When once we have ceased to acquiesce, in the most formal and simple manner, in the divine word, we are forced to yield to the demands of the human mind, which from argument to argument goes through all the degrees of logic, and never stops, because, in fact, it is impossible to come to any real, desirable, or even probable conclusion. Every thinking man who refuses to be a simple and docile Christian, must become a Pantheist. No one of any mental worth will ever stop short on the road of vulgar Rationalism, which is so much exposed to the sharp

\* De Wette, *Dogmatik*, 41-53.

† Schleiermacher, *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, ii. 352.

‡ This view of the Christian faith is developed principally in a work by J. Rusk, *Philosophie und Christenthum*. Mannheim, 1825.

§ *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, i. 103.

arrows of criticism. We find Spinozism in all the questions of speculative theology; and horrible as the very name is to many, yet from the idea of God to that of immortality, all is impregnated with the theological philosophy of Spinoza, because he was in fact the most profound thinker of modern times, and the most consistent of all anti-Christian reasoners.

The most illustrious of modern critics speaks thus on this subject:—"As to individual immortality," says Strauss, "Schleiermacher's expression to become one with the Infinite is all that modern science can say upon the subject." Schleiermacher further says,—"Life to come, as actually conceived, is the last enemy which speculative criticism has yet to encounter, and if possible to overcome."\* As, then, there is no personal God, no personal Christ, so there ought to be no personal man or true individuality. Since there is no real distinction between God and the world, between the divine and human mind, it is man's duty to put away from himself all individuality, and to lose his individual consciousness in the idea of God. In this consists piety; it is real only when we renounce ourselves. He does evil, he is a sinful man, who claims an individual independence. We might ask, What does morality become with such a picturesque definition of sin? but it would require a separate work to show all the injury done by such systematic conceptions. We will conclude this account of the consequences of Rationalism with the words of a sincere professor of it. We have, elsewhere, spoken of a violent controversy between the new school and a supernaturalist professor, who is very learned, but with whom we do not agree in his historical views, especially respecting France, whose providential mission he has misunderstood.† But I mention the dispute between Leo and the new school, which he accused of being atheistical, immoral, and inimical to its native country, only that I may quote some words of one of that school, which are necessary to this part of my subject. "No one now thinks of contradicting the complaints of Leo. All the principles of Christianity, yes, all that has hitherto been called religion, has fallen before the inexorable criticism of reason. The great revolution of which the French philosophers of the last century were only the precursors, has been accomplished in the domain of thought. It has completed its own creation. The philosophy of Protestantism is at an end; a new era is commencing, and it is the duty of those who have in themselves followed this mental development, to carry its extraordinary consequences into the conscience of the nation, that they may become a

\* *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, vol. ii. last section.

† *Histoire de Spinoza*, p. 355-360.



principle of life for Germany.”\* I will now attempt to place before my readers a parallel of the old and new systems.†

## INTRODUCTION.

*Old System.*

True morality is founded on religion.

True religion has its source in a supernatural revelation.

The truths of this revealed religion are contained in the Sacred Scriptures.

This revelation is proved by miracles, or works which surpass the known powers of nature.

The sacred writers ought to be considered as teachers of antiquity inspired by God ;—

Even when they teach us doctrines which surpass the limits of our reason, as the doctrines of expiation, of justification, &c.

*Rationalistic System.*

True religion is founded on morality.

The only source of true religion is the human reason.

The writings called the Sacred Scriptures are not more sacred than the works of Plato or Virgil.

All that is called miraculous ought either to be considered as mythical, or to be explained in a perfectly natural manner.

They deserve our belief only so far as they teach nothing more than our reason can understand.

When they teach doctrines which we do not understand, we ought not to believe them, first, because they cannot prove what they teach ; and secondly, because such doctrines have no influence on our lives.

## GENERAL THEOLOGY.

The existence of God is the first, and, at all times, most easily proved of all truths.

God is a personal being, who sees, acts, and understands : this is the ground of the Christian's assurance.

In a general sense God is the Father of all men ; but He is in a peculiar sense the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, as the Son of God, participates therefore, in the divine nature.

The Holy Spirit is a personality distinct from the Father and the Son.

The Trinity is a conception of the Deity taught by Christianity.

It is impossible to prove the existence of God.

The personality of God cannot be affirmed ; it is confounded with the soul of the world.

It is only metaphorically that God is called the Father of Jesus.

The title of Son of God may be given to every pious man.

The Holy Spirit is nothing more than a divine quality.

The Trinity is a scholastic invention of the middle ages.

\* The work so praised by the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, entitled *Schelling und die Offenbarung*. Leipzig, 1839. p. 9.

† The principal features of this parallel are taken from von Ammon's *Magazine*, vol. iii. part. 2. p. 15.



*Old System.*

The doctrine of Moses respecting the creation contains the most profound truths in the most simple narrative.

By the fall of the first man, the human race became degenerated from its state of innocence.

The doctrine of angels assists us in our conception of the world of intelligences.

What Scripture teaches us respecting the bad angels is calculated to put us on our guard with respect to morality.

*Rationalistic System.*

We must regard the accounts of Genesis as the productions of a poetical imagination, similar to the theogonies of other nations.

We are all born with the same purity as the first men who appeared on the earth.

The doctrine of angels has no reality; it is only a consequence of Judæo-Chal-dæan myths.

What we find in Scripture respecting the bad angels is equally unfounded in theory and dangerous in practice.

## CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTEROLOGY.

Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.

The doctrine which he taught us, he had learned from his Father.

His teachings were accompanied by miracles which attested his power.

He died on the cross and was buried; he returned to life and ascended into heaven.

Christ possesses the divine and the human nature.

God acts upon men by His Holy Spirit, to lead them to the knowledge of the truth, and to the improvement of their souls.

The sacraments of the church are means by which God communicates His grace to the faithful.

By baptism man undergoes a new birth.

In the Lord's Supper, Jesus strengthens by his presence the souls of the faithful, and gives them a pledge of his love and of their future admission to life eternal.

By his union with Christ in the church the Christian has the assurance of becoming also a member of the invisible church, in which are found all those redeemed by the Saviour.

Christ came into the world in the same way as other men.

From his own reflections he derived the doctrine which he taught us.

The cures which he worked might have been effected by others. And those whom he resuscitated were only in a lethargic state.

There is nothing real in these accounts, except the crucifixion. The resurrection admits of a natural explanation, and the ascension is a myth.

Human nature becomes divine by a pious life.

Man is abandoned to the free government of reason.

The sacraments are only symbols of an invisible truth.

Baptism is only a sign of the purity with which a Christian ought to live.

The Lord's Supper is only a memorial of the death of Jesus, and unites us with him only morally.

The church is only a human institution, whose teachings may be very distinct from the teachings of God. It gives therefore only relative aid.

## ESCHATOLOGY.

*Old System.*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the foundations of our immortal hopes.

Christ will judge the living and the dead.

Some will receive life eternal, others will be condemned to eternal death; all will preserve their individuality.

*Rationalistic System.*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is only an allegory which explains the conversion of Pagans to Christianity.

The future judgment is only a rabbinical vision.

Every one receives the punishment of his faults in this life; and there is no eternity save that of God, in which all beings are absorbed.

## CHAPTER XX.

STATE OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY IN GERMANY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—CONVERSION TO CATHOLICISM, OF F. SCHLEGEL, VON STOLLBERG, HAMANN, WERNER, VON HALLER—SCEPTICISM OF SOME THEOLOGIANs—PLAN OF REFORM—DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO THEOLOGY—VON WESSENBERG, WERKMEISTER AND HIS FOLLOWERS—BISHOP SAILER—F. BAADER, GÜNTHER, VEITH AND PABST, J. A. MÖHLER, HIRSCHEL—HERMESIANISM—ITS CONDEMNATION—RESISTANCE OF THE DISCIPLES OF HERMES.

IN the midst of those theological movements which, in the course of a century, have destroyed so much, and have thrown doubts on doctrines and facts concentrated by ages, we naturally ask what path was pursued by the Roman church, and whether the German party which had opposed the Reformation remained idle spectators of a struggle interesting to the whole Christian community. From our knowledge of the constitution of that church and its *à priori* method of judging everything which passes without the circle in which it has for ages moved, and to which it thinks proper still to confine itself, we may conclude also *à priori* that, though severely condemning the fatal tendencies of a theology contrary to the Gospel, it might nevertheless rejoice at them in the hope that the excess of the evil would call for a remedy, and that superior minds, not finding any in the new systems, would be driven into its bosom as a refuge from their fatiguing doubts. And at one time it seemed that this hope would be fulfilled, when men such as Schlegel, von Stollberg, Hamann, Werner, and von Haller, declared that nothing should keep them in a church whence all life had departed. But the very circumstances which induced these gifted men to make common cause with the Roman church were precisely those which prevented a far greater number from following their example. It was said that if the anarchy which prevailed, and which they foresaw would prevail for some time, in the church, induced them to join another church which promises unity of doctrines to its members, and suffers no contradiction in what it has decreed to be Christian truth, they gave in so doing a proof of egotism, since, instead of working according to their power for

the reform of a system whose many imperfections they perceived, they quietly retired to the tempting retreat offered by an *ecclesiastical faith* which demands nothing but submission to its authority, when they might, by seeking to kindle *religious faith* in men's hearts, have each contributed to the erection of a temple which must soon be built, and God would have rewarded their self-denial. It was asked whether, by sheltering themselves from the fury of the storm, they could save the vessel and those whom it contained, and whether there would not be much more merit in dying in the fight than in withdrawing from it to enjoy the delights of a tranquil existence.

But the support given to Catholicism by some justly celebrated neophytes had no other effect than that of exciting some obscure writers of the great cause to enter the lists proudly against the giants of Protestant learning; and as these combatants always had in view the triumph of the priesthood rather than that of the Gospel of the Son of God, the rumour of their opposition arising in some Catholic cantons of Switzerland, and in some French journals, quietly died away on the frontiers of Germany. At most, some isolated individuals were moved by it, but the mass of the German Catholics were perfectly indifferent to it. The fact is, that in Germany Catholicism has had a near view of all the life, force and truth of certain doctrines derived by Protestantism from Scripture, and substituted for the Roman doctrines respecting the merits of the saints and the manner in which we ought to appropriate their virtues, and it does not judge of these doctrines from the vagaries of Rationalism. In Germany the friends of religion are also the friends of severe and serious studies, and are not in the habit of forming an opinion on the grave questions which separate the two churches, from injurious pamphlets, or works in which ignorance and presumption dispute the mastery. They examine all the monuments which can throw light on a fact or doctrine; they consult the sources and weigh the value of evidence; they put aside the question of a church, otherwise so important for practical life, but which causes so many prejudices in those who do not know how to give it a secondary importance in the discussion of eternal truths which must influence, not the external life, but the conscience of every man who seeks for truth. For these reasons it is said that the theologians of Catholic Germany have never received from the Pontiff of the Vatican all the consideration which they seem to deserve from their learning, and, excepting a certain number of high dignitaries who are obliged from their position to entertain relations with the pontifical court, it is a thing unheard of for a German Catholic to consent to receive its faith implicitly from the foreigner. We do not mean to say that there is perfect sympathy between the Catholic and the Pro-

testant church, either Lutheran or Reformed ; but though remaining faithful to their traditional faith, the Catholics, and especially the majority of their best writers, oppose seriously and decently what they still think to be error ; and if they are jealous of anything, it is because they have not yet succeeded in creating repositories of instruction and learning which may rival the learned Universities of Protestant Germany. We must say, for the sake of historical truth, that, either from fatigue or from a feeling of inability to recover their lost ground, the theologians of the Roman communion virtually yielded up their weapons in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it would not be difficult to show, in the works published by some of their most distinguished men, a great number of propositions which could not fail to sound ill in the ears of their ultra-montane co-religionists. Among this number was Stattler, professor at Ingolstadt, of whom the venerable Sailer, his former pupil, bears witness that from the first page of logic to the last of theology, he had the talent of interesting his pupils and of teaching them to think for themselves.\* But thinking for oneself is not always a pledge of fidelity to the Roman church, if we may believe some of this writer's contemporaries, who assure us that many of his works were censured at Rome.† We must, however, state, since truth is the first duty of the historian, that it seems that those theologians of Catholic Germany who in opinion approached most nearly to their Protestant adversaries, did so, not so much from a conviction of Christian truth, as from a vague feeling of scepticism respecting Christian doctrines, which made them rather the friends of the French philosophy of the day, that looked with scepticism on the whole of revelation. But they hardly understood their own position. On one side they were influenced by the spirit of the age, which tended to the entire abolition of everything belonging to the past, both in politics and religion ; and on the other they were restrained by their old respect for the religion of their childhood. We cannot with impunity raise the fruit of the tree of knowledge to our lips. No sooner had the Catholic ecclesiastics tasted that fruit than they began to devote themselves to the work of reforming their church without completely overturning it. To this cause we may attribute the eager wel-

\* Alzog, *Universalgeschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 807. Mayence, 1841. I have been surprised to find nothing respecting this writer in the *Dictionary of Learned Catholics of Germany*, published by Felder and Waitzenegger.

† Huth, *Kirchengeschichte des 18<sup>ten</sup> Jahr hunderts*, vol. ii. The work by Sailer, against which Rome was most enraged, was entitled *On the System of the Pope's Primacy*. His principal works are, *Demonstratio Evangelica*. Aug. Vind. 1771. *Demonstratio Catholica*. Pappenh. 1775. *Theologia christ. theoretica*, vol. vi. Ingolstadt, 1776. *Allgem. Kathol. Religionslehre*. Munich, 1793.



come given to the reformatory projects of Joseph II., the zealous attempts of many Catholics to put a happy end to the secularisation of the bishoprics and cloisters, and finally the two classes of opinions and writers which even now exist, and between which the separation is every day growing wider. These two parties, known in France as Ultramontanists and Gallicans, have taken the more significant names of Curialists and Episcopalians; the former being applied to those of an Ultramontane tendency, and the latter to those who, retaining episcopacy, would still establish evangelical liberty in the bosom of a national church. The Episcopalians, without admitting unreservedly the principle of free religious inquiry, which would not have allowed them to retain a teaching church, still maintained that principle so far as concerns the purification of tradition, in order to the formation of an ecclesiastical constitution similar to that of the first centuries of the Christian faith; and they agreed with the evangelical writers in advocating the establishment of free Universities, the liberty of the press, the propagation of early instruction in the Scriptures and their dissemination in the vulgar tongue. The Curialists, on the other hand, were obliged to maintain their ground against the Liberals by flattering vulgar superstitions and undertaking their defence. These two parties differed especially respecting the celibacy of the priests. It is now some years since, from the recesses of Silesia to Mayence, the people claimed the right of marriage for a class of men who, it was declared, would be the more virtuous the more they resembled the pastors of the primitive church, who were thought worthy to rule because they knew how to govern their own families well.

The liberal party of Catholicism not only desired reforms in discipline, but also took a very active part in the improvement of the scientific studies of theology, and in the development of a doctrine which should be the more truly rational, the more it rested on Scripture and an enlightened tradition. This principle of liberality and knowledge, adopted by a large majority, gave rise to three new parties. One of these remaining firm in its opposition still calls for the reforms in Catholicism promised by Joseph, and may be compared to the party of constitutional priests in France. In its ranks we find the respectable vicar-general of Constance, von Wessenberg, who has been indefatigable in his efforts to extend still further the schemes accomplished by his zeal in his own diocese.\* To it belongs also Werkmeister, who,

\* His last work, *The General Councils of the 15th and 16th Centuries, compared with the Ancient History of the Church, for the Improvement of its Discipline*, (Constance, 4 vols. 1840,) has been well received only by that portion of the clergy who

even when studying in the cloister of Neresheim, became thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the reformers, and who, when he became chaplain of the Catholic church at the court of Stuttgart, effected a great number of reforms, which his archbishop seemed to authorise by silence, and particularly the celebration of the offices in the vulgar tongue, which it would now be so difficult to abolish. To this party belonged also a considerable number of ecclesiastics, all more or less known by works of merit, and whose reformatory views were supported by the University of Friburg (*in Brisgau*), and even by that of Tübingen until the time of Möhler. They found an organ in two journals, which are still edited by Pfanz, and which expressed the liberal Catholicism of Carové, Fridolin Huber, the brothers Theiner, one of whom afterwards returned into the inmost pale of the Roman church, of Schreiber, and of all those who united French freedom of thought to the most decided religious feelings of Germany. To this constitutional party, which sees in the positive religion of Christianity only the doctrine of charity to men, and in the church only an institution fitted to cherish it in the soul, belonged a man whose name is venerated throughout the whole of Germany, and whom it is our duty particularly to notice. I refer to the Archbishop of Regensburg, who ought to be considered as the best and purest representative of the moderate party of liberal Catholics, since even his opponents give him the name of a pious and enlightened man. Johann Michel Sailer was born in 1751 in a little village of Bavaria. It has been said of him,\* that if the existence which we owe to pious though poor parents is the greatest blessing which we can receive from God, Sailer ought to have been the most grateful of men, since he received this blessing most fully. We cannot help being affected by these words in one of his works respecting his mother: "I shall for ever be thy debtor, most beloved mother; whenever I think of all thy conduct, thy words, thy gestures, thy sufferings, thy beneficence, thy labours, thy hands which relieved misfortune, the fervour of thy prayers, from the time of my infancy, I always feel re-awakened in my heart the religious feelings and the hope of the eternal life which they promise; and these feelings can never be destroyed by any system, any doubt, any suffering, any tyranny, not even by any sin. That eternal life to which thou didst lead me animates me still, though forty years have passed away since thou hast quitted this earth."

The piety, which he thus imbibed so to say with his mother's milk, sympathise with the views of the author. Abbot Hefele has written a refutation of it, entitled, *Kritische Beleuchtung der Wessenbergschen Schrift. Die grosse Kirchen-Versammlung*, &c. Tübingen, 1841.

\* Klem. Baader, in the *Gallery of Learned Men and Statesmen*. 1816. Part. III.

was ever the inseparable companion of his studies, and, though it gave them a very liberal direction, preserved him from the perils of incredulity into which he might have been driven by the spirit of his day after the suppression of the order of Jesuits. That order Sailer had entered a few years before, and many will be not a little surprised to learn that he there passed the happiest part of his life. "I lived there," he wrote to one of his friends, "a life like paradise: meditation on eternal things, the love of the divine, fervour and piety which were cherished in this twofold element, and a superior spiritual life,—these were the advantages I gained from my noviciate." By this love of the divine he was always influenced, and it enabled him to say with his well-known candour, respecting the calumnies spread concerning him by false Catholics, "I would rather be calumniated for ten years, than spend one day in defending my innocence. To forget an injustice is not a virtue in me; for convinced as I am that the recollection of injustice causes agitation, I love my repose of mind too well to cherish any such recollection." I am very glad to have an opportunity of quoting the words respecting the Jesuits, of a man held in general esteem, and they will prove that it is as absurd to accuse wholesale, as is sometimes done, a body which has contained so many distinguished men, as it is to join with the ignorant in blaming the Protestant doctrines for the terrible extravagances of the extreme rationalists. "In the foundation of the order of Jesuits," said Sailer, "there was much that was divine in its development, much that was human, and at the period of its destruction the divine and human elements were equally wanting." If Fenelon, whose *Lettres Spirituelles* were translated by Sailer, had lived in our day, would not he have expressed similar opinions?

After Sailer had completed his studies at Ingolstadt, where he had been maintained by the liberality of a benefactor, he himself gave instruction in the philosophical and theological sciences successively at Munich, Ingolstadt, and Landshut. At the same time, feeling a desire to communicate to the people generally the instructions which he gave to the pupils of the Universities, he published a great number of works which give proofs of his great and varied knowledge and his noble and religious character. From them we learn his rare facility in treating all subjects relating to philosophy and theology, and in bringing forward their practical side, which he thought eminently fitted to enlighten and moralise the country to whose service he had devoted himself.\* We

\* His principal doctrinal works are, *The Foundations of Religion* (in German) and the *Evangelical Demonstration* (in Latin). His miscellaneous works on philosophy, religion, and education, as well as those which tend to awaken or revive religious feelings and practice, are very numerous.

do not mean to say that he considered doctrine of as little value as did the Catholic Kantists of his day; but being convinced with reason, that every doctrine of the Gospel ought to have its root in the heart of man, he regarded the Christian religion only as a means of purifying the feelings and inflaming the heart with a sacred love of virtue. In consequence of this preference for practical Christianity he has been accused of neologism by the curialists and of mysticism by all rationalists, because he had the good sense to agree with Fenelon, Lavater, Jacobi, and Schleiermacher, in maintaining that if intelligence was given us to direct us in the experimental sciences, we received a heart to bring us near to God, and to feel the truths which revelation offers as worthy our belief.

The influence of Sailer was great in southern Germany, notwithstanding the silly persecution raised against him by the enemies of enlightenment. But as that influence was exerted principally over the hearts of men, it is not surprising that his writings, numerous as they were, are held in veneration only among a small number of disciples, who, like him, place love higher than knowledge, and the religion of Jesus above the sects which dispute the inheritance of it without possessing its spirit. The time at which Sailer lived was less fit than any other for a great religious renovation. The din and turmoil of battle hardly left time for philosophy to destroy what still remained of the past. Quiet, patience, and much enlightenment, are necessary before we can re-build, and is it not, also, necessary that the ground should be cleared of the old ruins? With his great piety, his varied talents, and his honourable zeal, Sailer could only prepare materials for others, and give an example which will not be lost on religious Germany. Since the time of Sailer the theological movement in Catholic Germany has been of no little importance; and, notwithstanding my desire to pass on to the second reformatory efforts, I mean the bold essay of the Hermesians to place Catholicism on a new base, I must first cast a glance on the work effected by some men esteemed even by Protestant learning. These labours we owe to a third impulse given to contemporary theologians, by F. Baader on one side, and on the other by the celebrated author of the *Compared Creeds* of Catholics and Protestants. Doctrinal science was treated first by Liebermann, whose works have deserved the honour of becoming classics in the academies of Rome. He has, it is said, merited this distinction rather by his method of exposition and the clearness of his ideas, than by the exaggeration of his doctrines.\* Oberthür, who had acquired much knowledge in his journeys in Austria and Italy, felt that the

\* Fr. Liebermann, *Institutiones Theol.*, 5 vols. Mayence, 3rd edit., 1831-32.



best form for a good Christian doctrinal system would be the biblical, and he attempted to construct one on that plan.\* Dobmayer and Brenner, in their attempts, followed the example of Augustin, the ancient bishop of Hyppo, who took as the ground-work of his writings the idea of the kingdom of God. But it seems that this task can be well fulfilled, especially in its details and general harmony of doctrine, only by Franz Bittner, who, as yet, has given only hopes that he will do so. The Catholics expect quite as much from Professor Drey, who condescends to enter the field of speculative theology. It is well known that Franz Baader was not less inimical to the doctrine of the Roman infallibility, which he termed an insupportable tyranny, than the Protestants of the 16th century, but he nevertheless thought himself a good Catholic, and all his efforts, which showed high intelligence, were made to raise the Catholic faith to the height of a truly divine wisdom. He himself said that his numerous works ought to be regarded only as germs of true knowledge, which others would, at a favourable period, be called to develop. "The seedsman," said he, "professes only to sell seeds, not flowers; I am the seedsman—let others turn to account the seeds which I offer them."† Franz Hoffmann, one of his disciples, has endeavoured, by his ingenious essays, to respond to this appeal; and theologians of different parties have borne honourable testimony to him.‡ Sengler, Gengler, Schmitt, Alb. Kreuzhage, and some others,§ have also written on speculative theology, but few have done so with more originality and success than Pabst, Veith, and Günther,—these writers of talent who aimed at the same result by different means, and whose works completed each other. Günther was, so to say, the creator of the ideas which Pabst attempted by his explanations to put within the reach of a greater number of people. Günther was the author of the system which should at last conciliate opponents and overcome all differences; Pabst threw light on this painful, mental elaboration, by judicious explanations, while the eminently gentle and simple mind of Veith popularised the

\* The list of his works is very long; but those most in use among Catholic students are written in Latin, and entitled, *Encyclopædia et methodologiæ theologiæ, genio litterario gustui nostri ævi accommodatæ Spec. i. & ii.* Würzburg, 1783, in 4to. *Encyclopædia et methodologia theologica.* Salzburg, 1786.

† Fr. Baader, *Philos. Schriften*, &c. Münster, 1831-32. *Vorlesungen über speculative Dogmatik*, 5 Hefte. Münster and Stuttgart.

‡ *Vorhalle zur speculativen Lehre Fr. Baaders.* Aschaffenburg, 1836.

§ Sengler, *Ueber das Wesen und die Bedeutung*, &c. Mayence, 1834. Gengler, *The Ideal of Sciences, or Encyclopædia of Theology.* Bamberg, 1834. He had published before, at Landshut, 1827, reflections on the relations between philosophy and theology. Alb. Kreuzhage, *Ueber den Einfluss der Philosophie auf die Entwicklung des innern Lebens.* Münster, 1831.



system, by means of the prayer uttered at some period by every Christian.\*

At a later period, J. B. Baltzer attempted to establish himself on the territory of speculative theology, as a mediator between Catholicism and Protestantism,† but Professor L. Klee soon closed all the avenues to fame against him by the publication of works full of life and talent.‡ No one, however, has yet equalled in renown Adam Möhler, who, in his critical examination of the Protestant systems compared with the Roman Catholic system, showed great knowledge, singular good faith, and religious feeling, equal to his learning and sincerity. He has, it is true, found opponents worthy of him in the Protestant theologians, Baur of Tübingen, and Nitzsch of Bonn; but though they can conquer him on biblical grounds, they cannot do so on the question of the church, which forms the most ingenious part of his system.§ Staudenmayer, Kuhn, Hefele, and Reynmayer, each in a somewhat different sphere, attempt to imitate Möhler, or, at least, to become imbued with his spirit. Hirschel, on the other side, devotes his attention to questions of morality, and endeavours to remove from them every shade of scholasticism, which Sailer himself and his immediate followers, Greischüttner, Reyberger, Schenkl, Wankeriet, and Riegler, had not entirely destroyed. Hirschel indisputably shares with Möhler the glory of influencing the most active party of the Catholic theologians of Germany, but it is very evident that he would not take so decided a position as his celebrated predecessor in the chair of the University of Tübingen, and that he feels more at ease in writing on morals, his treatise on which is considered as superior to anything of the kind possessed by Catholic Germany.||

We cannot, consistently with the plan we have laid down, make a

\* Beside his co-operation with Pabst in the *Two Heads of Janus for Philosophy and Theology*, Günther is better known by his *Last Creed*, explanatory of those of Möhler, and his opponent Baur of Tübingen. Heinrich Pabst, among other philosophical works, wrote one entitled, *Is there a Positive Philosophy of Christianity?* Cologne, 1832. Veith's work on the Lord's Prayer consists of a series of explanatory discourses. Vienna, 1831.

† *Beiträge zur Vermittelung*, &c. 2 Hefte. Breslau, 1839.

‡ Klee, *System der catholischen Dogmatik*, 3 vols. Mayence, 1835; and a *History of Doctrine*, 2 vols. Mayence, 1837.

§ *Symbolik, oder Darstellung*, &c. The 5th edition, which I have before me, is preceded by a life of the author, who died in the prime of life (April 12, 1838), at the age of 42. I understand that the French edition of his *Symbolik*, a work which is held in such high esteem in Germany, and marks the commencement of a new era in theology, remains unnoticed in Catholic France.

|| "Professor Hirschel's *Treatise on Morals* is as far removed from the Josephist productions of Wanker, Weikmeister, and Wessenberg, as heaven is from

digression to the subjects of polemics and asceticism, in order to notice the labours of some men in Bavaria and Würtemberg. We must be content with saying that those men only need a little travelling to teach them the sole means of restoring, if possible, harmony to the different families of Christianity, or at least to enable them to form, like Möhler, Klee, Hirschel, Günther, and so many others, an exact idea of the power of their opponents. We should not then see such writers as Guido Görres wasting so much talent in drawing on the cause which they defend, attacks difficult to be repulsed. But our survey of the actual position of Catholic science in Germany would certainly be incomplete, if we omitted to mention Hermesianism, which, though professing to defend Christian piety against incredulity better than any other system, has nevertheless incurred the displeasure and menaces of Rome.\*

Who was Hermes? What innovations did he wish to make in Catholicism? What are the views of his enthusiastic and enlightened disciples who inhabit the banks of the Rhine, and especially the University of Bonn? Hermes was born at Dreyerwalde in 1775. He early became a proficient in the philosophical and religious learning of the day, and he imagined that the Catholic doctrine could be restored, and the Christian life re-awakened in the Catholic community, only by means of logic and clear and powerful demonstrations. He was strongly attached to the Roman church, which he believed to be the sole guardian of the truth: he devoted to it his services; and his zeal for making converts and strengthening the faith of believers was never diminished. At the time of his death, in 1831, he was labouring for the cause as earnestly as in periods so disastrous to the faith, when all the winds of heaven seemed to rage against the Roman church and every relic of Christian antiquity. But can Catholicism treat religion scientifically? Is it permitted to place its creed on any foundation save the authority

earth, and in reading it we can easily do justice to their morality of the reason." These are the words of a curialist writer, a man of the noblest charity and tolerance, which he has shown in a work on *Liberalism and strict Orthodoxy in the Catholic church*. The author's name is Hahn: he fills the office of chaplain at St. Gall.

\* For the same reason we pass over the discussions raised by the question of mixed marriages, not only between Catholics and Protestants, but also between curialists and liberals. This question does not in any way concern doctrinal points, nor consequently modern Rationalism. There yet remains, however, ground for cultivation and fruits to be gathered by unprejudiced science. But if we except Klee's *History of Doctrine*, and von Alzog's *History of the Church*, we cannot mention any interesting historical production; since the *History of the Church in Modern Times*, by Dr. and Prof. Riffel, does not appear to us to be impartial.

of the Pope and the Bishops? Is it not an anomaly to attempt to prove, by the free inquiry of criticism, what the infallibility of the church alone has a right to declare true or false, worthy of faith or condemnation? Hermes, like all other sincere Catholics, must have asked himself these questions; but though avowing to himself that all inquiry on his part must necessarily lead him to the conclusions of the council of Trent, on pain of being declared a heretic, he still persevered in his intention of giving to Catholic Christianity the new support of a scientific demonstration. To this purpose he devoted all his labours, in his university instruction, and the different works published in his lifetime or by his disciples since his death. He filled the theological chair of Münster from 1807 till 1820; he then removed to Bonn, where he spent the remainder of his life.

We will give a sketch of the opinions of Hermes, as found in his principal works.\* The reason of man, said he, is without doubt endowed with the faculty of knowing, but we must distinguish between what is in itself a principle of knowledge, and a principle of recognition. The adoption of the first principle engenders Rationalism, while the other conducts directly to Catholicism, which rests only on history. But an exposition of historical faith is only a preliminary; that it may become a reality, we must enter into researches which shall bear testimony to it, and these researches, to have any result, should commence with positive doubt, that we may overcome by thought. Then we must become convinced of the truth of the New Testament, of the conformity of oral instruction with that added by tradition to the different parts of Scripture. We should then ask ourselves two questions relative to the external or internal truths of things which we consider as the sources of our mediate knowledge. Now, as the Catholic theology is purely historical, as it rests on the fact that its doctrines are identical with the doctrines of Jesus, the true Catholic's principle of knowledge is not a *rational* nor an *à priori* principle. No, this principle ought to be essentially historical in its character, and accessible to all minds; and the author undertakes to show that the Catholic church alone possesses these two characteristics, and that if they are once recognised, the arbitrary barrier between philosophy and theology will be removed. Hermes, then, in his *positive Introduction*, as he calls it, demonstrates the historical and intrinsic truth of the documents which contain theological truth, and in his *philosophical Introduction*, in which he opposes

\* *Inquiry into the Internal Truth of Christianity.*—*Einleitung in die Christ.-katholische Theologie*, 1st part, 1819; 2nd part, 1829. *Christlich-katholische Dogmatik nach seinem Tode herausgegeben*, published in 1834, by one of his disciples, Prof. Achterfeld.

Kant and Fichte, though he does not altogether disagree with them, he arrives at the conclusion that God is the foundation of all human knowledge, the only source of all truth, and therefore the only judge of the means by which He is pleased to lead us to that truth. When Hermes has established the existence of God as the principle of knowledge, and has thus proved the possibility of a revelation, he no longer troubles himself about the contents of that revelation, for he must have a very weak reason who cannot believe what God has revealed. So that this Catholic work reasons in such a way, that though the reader has followed the author's arguments, he is quite surprised at conclusions which any Catholic, enlightened but devoted to his church, must necessarily draw from the principles laid down and developed by Hermes.

This system bears some similitude to that advocated by Lamennais before his rupture with Rome, when he, too, admitted Catholicism only as a fact, in whose favour he compelled the human race to bear testimony. But substitute the word Christianity for the word Catholicism in the works of Lamennais and Hermes, and, without altering their arguments in the least, you may draw equally strong conclusions in favour of the truth of Christianity alone. How, then, can these two writers exclude Protestant Christianity from the benefits of Catholic Christianity? But this is not the place to dispute with such a system; we will only state that the late Pope,\* notwithstanding the Catholic conclusions of its author, condemned it as erroneous, and tending to scepticism and indifference. But it has been very well remarked, that Rome did not condemn so much the rational form by means of which Hermes attempted to arrive at Catholicism as his starting point, which, as we have said, is doubt, and which, we are reminded by Gregory XVI., contradicts in fact the path hitherto pursued by the defenders of Catholicism; and would, if once recognised as legitimate, undermine Roman Catholicism, and, though it might not conduct to scepticism and indifference, might still lead far away from the conclusions of Hermes himself.† We have here one more proof that it is in vain to attempt to give to Roman Catho-

\* By a Bull, dated Sept. 26, 1835.

† *Le Semeur*, 1838, p. 107, has an interesting article on Hermesianism, but we do not understand its criticism of the system of Hermes, when the biblical Protestant views have so much in common with those of this excellent man. Biblical Protestantism also permits the examination of the documents which contain the Christian faith, and then it demands complete obedience to scriptural truths. The only difference is, that the Hermesian Catholic finds in the Bible a doctrine which the Protestant does not find there, viz., the infallibility of the church; but if there exists no external authority to decide between the two, who has any right to blame them?



licism a scientific constitution ; and another conclusion that we may draw from it is, that Rationalism is impossible in such a state of things. But we will not affirm that extreme incredulity never borrows the Catholic cloak, and thus gives an example of the most detestable hypocrisy. What do the disciples of Hermes mean, when, since the condemnation of their master, they assert that the Pope has not understood them ? Does the right of infallibility extend to the comprehension of a system ? If they have once, by their reason, acknowledged the right of infallibility, do they not, by a necessary consequence, profess that reason can no longer discuss the object of that infallibility ? They speak of the Jesuitical denunciation of false brethren who persecute them, they allege the ignorance of their opponents, and a thousand subterfuges of the Jansenists, in order to justify themselves in a resistance which every consistent Catholic will condemn until it shall be frankly defined in what limits Catholicism can remain Catholicism without the pontifical action.

Protestations have however been made ; but the Roman Catholics of some parts of Germany have answered, Give thanks to the Holy Father who, in his tender solicitude for erring though pious and learned men, has been willing still to retain you within his fold, and has spoken only of the tendencies of your system, when he might have found in your writings, particularly in those of Baltzer, semi-rationalistic and semi-pelagian propositions, which, from the time of St. Augustin, the Roman church has always pursued with its anathemas.\* And then what a tone you have taken with those of us who wished to continue *Roman Catholics* ! Can the reason whose defence you have undertaken, authorise the insulting language of the *Review for Catholic Theology* which you published at Bonn, and which owed its failure only to the unheard-of extravagance in which it indulged ?

Two disciples of Hermes, however, Dr. Elvenich, professor at Breslau, and Dr. Braun, professor at Bonn, assuming the pilgrim's staff, resolved to go and enlighten the pontiff who had condemned them unheard ; but they were prevented from doing so, and instead of an inquiry being made into the merits of the question, all the ecclesiastics were required to give their simple and entire adhesion to the bull of the Pope which condemned Hermesianism. Some submitted, and among them were the professors of the seminary of Trèves. But the majority have refused compliance to this day, and there are consequently in the Rhenish provinces, and in Westphalia, a great number of

\* These accusations are brought against Baltzer's work entitled *Means for forming an exact Judgment respecting Catholicism and Protestantism*, especially pp. 156 and 264. Part II. Breslau, 1840.



ecclesiastics who oppose the ecclesiastical authority which they pretend to reverence. It is true that they say that the Pope had no right to condemn in Hermes the very thing of which he approved in the affair of Professor Bautain of Strasburg; \* but when papacy has imposed silence on any one of its adherents, he can never be permitted to speak, and moreover the friends of Rome have answered that there is a medium between the Rationalism of Hermes and the unreasonable doctrine of Bautain, which deprived man of all power of knowledge, in order to enrich faith. The future will show whether this medium, which is the stronghold of German curialists, if any writer take up the idea of giving it a scientific form, will not be considered revolutionary, and as such be anathematised by the authority which permits no discussions in religious science save those that set out from principles which, on the contrary, speculative Catholic theology regard as the end to be attained.

\* See the Report of the Bishop of Strasburg concerning the works of the Abbé Bautain. Paris, 1838; and Möhler's letter, *Sendschreiben an Herrn Bautain*, in his miscellaneous writings, vol. ii. p. 141-164: also the deductions made by Prof. Braun from this position of the Pope in condemning at Bonn what he approved at Strasburg: *The Doctrine of Hermesianism on the Relation between Reason and Revelation declared good and dangerous by the Bishop of Strasburg and Pope Gregory XVI.* Bonn, 1835.

## CHAPTER XXI.

POSITION OF SUPERNATURALISM IN GERMANY—ITS PROBABLE TRIUMPH IN A CONSTITUTION UNITING THE ELEMENTS OF LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY—RECENT DISPUTES RESPECTING THE CONFESSIONS OF FAITH—THE BISHOP AND PREACHER DRÄSEKE—MEDIATION OF BRETSCHNEIDER AND OF SCHELLING WITH THE NEW PHASE OF HIS PHILOSOPHY—CONCLUSION.

WE must not attempt to conceal from ourselves, that the situation of Supernaturalism in Germany is almost desperate. Traverse the provinces of this interesting country, examine the universities, enter the temples, and learn the nature of the doctrines taught there ; question the man of the world, converse with the learned, consult the innumerable productions of contemporaneous literature,—and everywhere you will find the supernaturalists in a minority. Even where you may still meet with enlightened friends and warm defenders of supernaturalist principles, you will too often find that they are undecided, and think themselves obliged to yield part of their ground in order to defend the rest. Add to this critical position, the fact that Christians in times of moral stagnation allow themselves to be easily overcome by the audacity of criticism, and that Rationalism, on the contrary, is upheld in its opinions by every secret or declared enemy of Christian sentiments.\* When we consider the precarious state of Supernaturalism in Germany, the audacious criticism of some, the ignorant frivolity of others, we may ask, What will become of the church of Christ, as minds become more and more absorbed in the material interests of life ? We dare not answer so grave a question. For myself, it is my duty, as an historian, to state facts as they are, and not to predict what may happen. When however we wish to show the position of Supernaturalism in Germany,

\* [Since the author wrote these words, a reaction towards the older forms of opinion has taken a more and more decided character.—E.]

that is to say, of the system which continues to defend an immediate revelation from God, and the doctrines introduced by that revelation into the Christian church, we suppose that it still occupies a place in that country, and that it has not been entirely exterminated by rationalism. It is an indisputable fact, that here and there in the numerous provinces of Germany are to be found writers of approved merit, who defend the ancient faith with talent and perseverance; but is their success certain? We must here put Catholicism out of the question, although it is itself a prey to division, because Catholicism, properly so called, is essentially supernaturalistic, and he ceases to belong to its community who in the least degree passes over the limits which it has irrevocably fixed. But we have shown in recounting the labours of several supernaturalists that in the bosom of German Protestantism there are representatives of Christian Supernaturalism, who, though of different shades of opinion, vigorously oppose the enemy of the ancient faith.\*

But, strictly speaking, many of these writers can belong to Supernaturalism only virtually, and not quite rightfully, and yet it is on the grounds of right that theological questions ought to be debated: what is virtual is in its nature too variable for us to form a certain opinion of it, and hence it follows that victory cannot be secure to him who does not fight on the side to which he rightfully belongs. Argument will always overcome all that is not placed under the eternal safeguard of right. We shall thus, it is true, be always confined to the position which Heaven has commanded us to defend until the extinction of life, but the sword of logic will be stronger than good intentions, and Rationalism has on its side logic against many supernaturalists. God forbid that I should not do justice to the learning and piety of these men. As I have been just to men with whose anti-Christian tendencies I cannot sympathise, so will I allow that it is owing to the noble efforts, to the numerous and instructive works of many of the supernaturalist theologians, that Rationalism has not yet received the title of national religion in a country where it is advocated by a large majority. I will say more; these works of modern supernaturalists, though in certain parts very dogmatical, are distinguished from those of their predecessors, with some rare exceptions, by a frankly liberal character, by a wise use, I do not say of reason,

\* If this history had been that of Supernaturalism instead of Rationalism, we should have given a prominent place to the labours of Tholuck, who, though he has not written on doctrine, has made known his decidedly Christian tendencies by his Commentaries on the Psalms, on the Gospel of John, on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and by his *Guido und Julius*, in which the principal points of Christian doctrine, sin and redemption, are treated with a masterly hand.

that would be too little, but of all the resources offered by science for the moral, and therefore rational, establishment of the revealed truths which Rationalism persists in rejecting as incomprehensible. We have shown that all attacks on the Bible have called forth apologies for it, stronger in argument, and that if Rationalism has undermined the authority of each of the biblical books, their authenticity has been defended with much success, either by inconsistent rationalists or by supernaturalists of immense learning.\* The German supernaturalists have now the good sense not to despise the weapons which their adversaries know so well how to use. They will now never dream of allowing science to blockade them in their elevated position, as Schleiermacher feared it would. They know how, when necessary, to change their ground of defence, to employ successively criticism, history, philosophy, psychology, all the branches of learning in fact, as supports for the Christian edifice, which they earnestly desire to restore. And why, if the truth is on their side, should not such illustrious labours be crowned with brilliant success? Why should not the churches at last allow the discordant voices of Rationalism to sink into silence, and eagerly rally round the standard of truths which have been the joy and consolation of past generations? Alas! we dare not yet hope for this; and the reason is, that German Supernaturalism has not yet fixed the limits which separate it essentially from Rationalism; that its theologians frequently make concessions for which they have no authority save their own individual opinions, concessions which materially affect the strength of things that they wish to retain. Supernaturalism and Rationalism are too decidedly opposed to each other, to allow any hope of an union between them.

If Supernaturalism yields one given point, it may be very reasonably asked, why it stops there in its concessions. On such grounds, logically speaking, we may accuse Neander and Hengstenberg of Rationalism, just as well as Gesenius and Wegscheider, though the two professors of Berlin would be shocked to find their names coupled with those of the professors of Halle whom they so strenuously oppose. But it is not a greater or less degree of infidelity that is culpable, but infidelity itself; not only is he a traitor to his country who deserts to the ranks of the enemy, but he also who has secret communications with them, or who abandons a position which it was his duty to defend to the last extremity. Let us confine ourselves to the two professors of Berlin,

\* Who would not place by the side of the works by Hengstenberg, Hävernicks, and Baumgarten, on the Old Testament, and of Olshausen on the New, all so decidedly supernatural, the learned *Introductions to the New Testament* of the rationalists, Schott, Credner, and Neudecker?

already mentioned, and examine Neander's *History of the Establishment of Christianity*, his *Life of Jesus*, in answer to Strauss,—works displaying the purest piety and the most profound erudition,—and Hengstenberg's *Views on the Inspiration of the Old Testament*, which are to be found in his two most important works. Would it be difficult to prove that certain of their views are inconsistent with the principles of Supernaturalism ; that in sometimes substituting their own authority for the only authority which they recognise as legitimate, they commit a logical error ; and that Rationalism will always have an argument against them, because it has the same right to protest against what they admit, that they have to reject a part of what their principles would compel them to admit? \* The great evil resulting from this, is the false position in which supernaturalists have stood since they have relaxed the reins of discipline in the Lutheran church, if indeed they were ever tightly drawn, especially since either virtually or actually the symbolical books have been declared worthless. It may be, and indeed has been, demanded by Hahn at Leipzig, with more zeal than prudence, that the intruders should be driven from the sanctuary, but the rationalists conceive that their right to the ecclesiastical dignities is quite as good as that of any one else, and it will be impossible to deprive them of it unless we re-establish the custom, as old as Christianity itself, of requiring every pastor of a church and every teacher in a Christian university to promise to teach according to a creed clearly set before him. The rationalists know well that if this custom were restored their cause would be lost ; at the present time they are making a last effort in almost all parts of Germany, especially at Cassel, at Altenburg, Hamburg, Bremen, and Magdeburg, while they hope for co-operation in other quarters, to destroy the very memory of those symbolical books that condemn them. † The attack was most formidable at Cassel. The minister of the interior having prescribed, in 1838, for the candidates for church offices, a formulary which exacted from them a promise to *have respect* to the symbolical books in preaching, one of the consistorial councillors protested against this innovation. The whole body of rationalists immediately poured forth a deluge of pamphlets upon this poor councillor Eberhard and the few who dared to espouse his cause. Here Rationalism took the side of the civil power in a case of direct usurpation against the eternally

\* I might have said that the epithet of Rationalist and the name of Professor Hengstenberg would clash together, but some of my critics have had the *charity* to say that I accused Hengstenberg of Rationalism. How can I protest against such a senseless judgment ?

† The dispute at Magdeburg was more doctrinal, and related to the worship of Jesus, which was opposed by Sintenis, who has been so badly answered.



rational principle of the confessions of faith in a religious society which wished to preserve its existence; and, as usual, a great cry was raised at Cassel against the enemies of enlightenment and religious liberty, as if it were wished to compel the outeriers to believe and practise. I repeat, that when all true supernaturalists shall have just ideas respecting liberty, when they shall cease to display any sort of fanaticism, when they shall remain firm to their principles, then they will have on their side men of good faith from all parties. In this controversy at Cassel, which is still going on, we may mention particularly on the rationalist side the work of the advocate Henkel,\* who totally rejects the confessions of faith, and bravely offers to maintain his ground against every aggression. We might mistake this frankness for loyalty to his cause, were not his book entirely destitute of ideas, and full only of violence against Dr. Bickell, who had with justice asserted that, *in principle*, the confessions of faith were a bulwark against incredulity. Dr. Bickell treats the legal question rather in a canonical point of view.† Another defender of Eberhard takes a malicious pleasure in showing the ignorance of Dr. Henkel on subjects of religious doctrine, and speaks admirably of the nature of Protestantism, which cannot be a religion of negation, and must be founded on doctrines that it is necessary to fix in confessions of faith, if we would not see them lost in the midst of the indifference or hostility of passing generations.‡ But let Supernaturalism beware; if it can conquer, humanly speaking, only by means of this external bulwark, it ought to defend rather the principle of confessions of faith than the confessions actually existing. There are articles in those confessions

\* *Einige Worte wider die Feinde der Vernunft und der Glaubensfreiheit.*

† *Ueber die Verpflichtung der evangel. Geistlichkeit auf die symb. Bücher.* Cassel, 1839.

‡ *Ein Wort über Lehrfreiheit*, by W. K. Maurer, Rector and Professor at Hofgeismar. Dr. Lücke, speaking of some works on ecclesiastical law in the *Gelerhte Anzeigen*, of Göttingen, justly congratulates the present day on the fact that such distinguished lawyers as Bickell, Stahl, and Puchta, not only study ecclesiastical law professionally, but also show a profound knowledge of the Gospel, which contradicts the old proverb respecting lawyers. But it is curious to learn Lücke's opinion on the symbolical books. He says, in concluding his article, "The fundamental essence of the church consists not so much in any creed as in a good ecclesiastical discipline and a good theology, which enable it to retain pure doctrine and true practice. *We do not undervalue the protection given by creeds to the church any more than we undervalue the protection given to the state by a constitution.* But without the supreme protection of free conviction, clear knowledge, and a loyal will, they are all only temporary securities, merely a law which exists only to prevent infractions, and which nevertheless causes them. But who would think of dispensing with laws?"—(*Göttingen gelehrte Anzeigen*. 1841. pp. 30, 31.)

which it would be impossible for an enlightened Christian to subscribe ; he would be compelled altogether to renounce the books containing these anomalies were a revision of them refused. Rationalism knows so well that such a measure would be its death-blow, and that it would immediately lose its credit with the people, if it were effected, that it opposes this imperative revision quite as strenuously as the re-admission of the old symbolical books. All the strength of Rationalism lies in this maxim, as absurd in its principle as it is fatal in its consequences, viz., that the Bible *only* ought to be considered the rule of faith,—the Bible, all the pages of which have been torn or soiled by rationalists, the Bible, which they do not believe, and yet from which they tell the people that they derive their misused authority. But let Christians unite and say, We do not speak of a negative profession of faith ; you must confess that the Bible contains doctrines which we would believe and instil into the minds of our children ; and lest we should err, we will read them there in the spirit in which they have been read by the faithful Christians of eighteen centuries. If you do not find them there, you may undoubtedly form a society according to your own convictions ; but for our churches, founded on the words of Christ and the apostles, they know you not ; or, rather, they know you to be erring men, whom we would see united to us, communicating at the same table, and full of faith in the blood of the new covenant, which was shed for you also, and which would cry aloud for vengeance if you continued to profane it.

This necessity for a confession of faith, more definite than the vague principle that the Bible is itself that confession, arises from the very nature of things, for no society can exist without a standard round which its members may rally ; and it is, moreover, proved by history. Rationalists themselves have proved it, when, like Lessing, they have shown that numerous churches long existed without knowing the Bible, since the canon was not then formed, and that they were nevertheless flourishing, because they had a creed which was the faithful expression of the doctrines contained in the Bible. In this Semler and Schleiermacher agreed, and the rationalists in general have not contradicted them. Lessing remarked, with justice, though with a purpose hostile to religion,—“The religion of Jesus Christ was practised before any of the apostles or evangelists had written ; the Lord’s Prayer was repeated before Matthew or Luke had recorded it in their Gospels ; the form of baptism had been used before it was made known by the same Gospels, for Jesus prescribed it himself, and baptism could not be performed without its use. . . . It is then impossible not to believe that the early Christians had a sort of creed, containing all that they were to

believe, compiled, perhaps, by Jesus Christ himself, or at least by the apostles, and this they called the *rule of faith*.”\* When De Wette says that it is a *pure and simple* impossibility to confine doctrine within symbolical limits,† he forgets that all theologians of his opinions have said that a doctrinal system can only be the exposition of a doctrine at a given period. Let it be so, then, with a creed : we would not have it stereotyped, but susceptible of development and improvement, as it may be found necessary. Such an objection does not touch the principle itself, which cannot be destroyed without completely abandoning the very idea of a church.‡

In the mean time, the theologians of both sides lament the religious indifference which is gradually spreading throughout all classes of society. From the Christian pulpits in Germany are continually heard expressions of sorrow on this subject. And who will refuse the homage due in this respect to the noble efforts of rationalists themselves, of those eloquent orators, Tzschirner, von Ammon, Schleiermacher, Bretschneider, Zimmermann, Alt, Schmaltz, Röhr, and a number of others who have vainly employed their brilliant powers ? But where must we seek for the cause of these complaints and this grief, if not in the dissension of religious parties, and especially in the small esteem in which Rationalism holds the word of God ? If I was surprised by anything in travelling and studying in Germany, it was not by the decay of evangelical faith, but rather by the fact that in the midst of so many causes of ruin and dissolution, the Christian feelings have still continued alive in many hearts. The reason of this is, that men are always better than their principles, and that

\* See Lessing's *Theological Works*, p. 75.

† *Theolog. Studien und Kritiken*. 1831.

‡ The more I study the work of Bretschneider, recently published, on this subject, the more he seems to me to agree with these views, and I must say of this controversial work,<sup>a</sup> that if the question of confessions of faith could be decided in the way which rationalists wish, no one, perhaps, would have succeeded better than the theologian who justly enjoys great consideration from both parties, on account of his vast learning, and the sort of medium which he has tried to find between philosophical Rationalism and decided Supernaturalism. But Bretschneider has in this work shown only his learning, and because he has succeeded in refuting a number of anti-biblical assertions, which the symbolical books gave as expressions of the Word of God, he has, therefore, pronounced them insufficient, and rejected them. But here he does not reason justly. The only legitimate conclusion is, that if the symbolical books were corrected and elevated to the present state of learning, they would possess an authority against which the clamour of fanatics would be powerless.

<sup>a</sup> *Die Unzulässigkeit des Symbolzwangs in der evangelischen Kirchen*. Leipzig, 1841.

Rationalism is not yet entirely understood by the people. In their idea, Rationalism is only Christian morality preached with less severity, and that is all that they want; while they reject Supernaturalism, not on the ground of its principles, of which they cannot judge, but on account of the inflexible laws which it proclaims, and often we may say on account of the harsh, stiff, and even grotesque forms under which it dispenses the Bread of Life. Preachers, such as Harms, Thérémín, and Tholuck, who, each in his own way, know how to unite the elegant forms of the French pulpit with the more severe and argumentative style of the Germans, have not many imitators. I should despair of seeing Supernaturalism, which these preachers represent so well, resume the superiority to which it is entitled from the worth of its principles, if I did not believe that the German church will one day recover its independence. That independence it has imprudently sacrificed to the temporal power, in expiation of the faults of another age; but in taking a new ecclesiastical constitution, it will proclaim Christian truths under a form which shall reconcile the rights of human dignity with those of revelation, by which they are by no means despised. Kant said somewhere, that a religion which declared war against human reason would never exist long. Had the philosopher of Königsberg said against human dignity, he would have spoken an eternal truth. Let Supernaturalism never forget that the religion of Christ, far from making war on man's dignity, came only to restore to us the lost titles of our primitive greatness.

In mentioning the most illustrious German preachers, I have purposely omitted one whom, in my former edition, I placed with von Ammon and Schmaltz. With many of their opinions he long agreed, and at that time the only works of Dräseke known to me, were some discourses dated, some from Mölln or St. George, near Ratzeburg, and others from Bremen. Though eloquent and sincere, they were deficient in that evangelical spirit which can be communicated only by an anti-rationalistic faith. I had some vague idea that Dräseke had changed the direction of his opinions since he was invested with the high functions of general superintendent, and raised to the episcopacy; and this has since been confirmed by a satirical pamphlet, written against his *actual* style of preaching, and seasoned by anecdotes more or less pointed, of the way in which he carries on his ministry at Magdeburg, and throughout the province under his spiritual jurisdiction. This pamphlet is by an anonymous writer, who is captivated by the talents of Dräseke, from one of whose old sermons he says that he derives daily edification, but who deplores that the bishop, in his episcopal visits, speaks "when he thinks proper" of the Saviour of the world, in places where that divine name had not been mentioned in his presence in the sermon of the



pastor visited, and that in general he has fallen into a *christolatry*, of which there was not the least sign when the light of truth (rationalistic) shone before him. He who, contrary to the author's intention, would form a high idea of Dräseke's zeal in the fulfilment of his high functions, and of his fine talents of preaching, has only to read *Der Bischof Dräseke und sein achtjähriges Wirken im Preussischen Staate*, von G. von C. (an assumed name). Bergen, 1840. Notwithstanding the witticisms and the grave subjects of scandal which we find in this book, we cannot fail to ask, Why employ so much talent in making us respect the man whom you would lower in our esteem? Dräseke is now a septuagenarian; he was born at Brunswick in 1774, but, says a lexicographer, "he still labours richly blessed, and with all the powers of his noble mind."\*

Two men of our day may be mentioned as able to give powerful support to moderate Supernaturalism, the one a theologian of great renown, and the other a philosopher of the highest celebrity. A work has lately appeared, which recommends the doctrinal system of Bretschneider as the true medium which shall reconcile all contradictions, because it is at once theological and philosophical, and by this double character raises Christianity to a religion of the intellect, and because it offers to our faith a new trinity equally rational and scriptural. This trinity consists in belief in the personality of God, in the individual immortality of men, and in virtue as the aim of life and the condition of this immortality. This it represents as the only true and eternal Trinity, the only one which can be generally received, and can attach to the Gospel of the Son of God all pious men.† It is now well known that Schelling has changed the direction of his labours, and has undertaken the sublime task of showing the truth of Christian revelation by proving that it is the complement and explanation of humanity in all its phases.

We would not question the merit of the superintendent of Gotha, nor dispute his right to the title of conciliator, which the admirers of his fine talents have given him. But by showing exactly the place which his religious ideas occupy in the domain of theology, we shall prove that his equivocal position between the two contending systems disqualifies him for the work of effecting the triumph of modern Supernaturalism, of which he is called the defender.

Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, an eloquent preacher, a correct and prolific writer, and an indefatigable journalist, since he succeeded Zimmermann in the editorship of the *Allgemeine Kirchen Zeitung*, has employed

\* *Encyclop. der deutsch-National Literatur. bearbeitet*, von O. L. B. Wolff, vol. ii. p. 199.

† *Die rechte Mitte, oder Rationalismus und Christianismus* Leipzig, 1841.



his powers on every question which has during the last thirty years agitated religious society ; and without positively joining any party, he has attempted to find some position where, free from every influence, he might act upon the mind of his contemporaries in such a way as to awaken their Christian feelings. But it is in vain for him to talk of his neutrality and his good will towards Supernaturalism. His language, and the conclusions at which he has arrived, prove that Supernaturalism has nothing to hope from his principles, and the protection given by his journal to everything of a rationalistic tendency, and the severe censures which he there passes on works of a different description, speak very plainly as to his predilections. We find, moreover, in the *Annals of History and Politics* of Pölitz, some critical reflections by Bretschneider, which give a fair idea of his religious opinions. The article treats of mysticism, and he defines it as a tendency of the human mind to found the religious opinions principally upon sentiment. He then recounts the fatal consequences, as displayed in the history of all nations, of such a mode of thought in religion. We might dispute the justness of this definition, since the errors which are mentioned are frequently caused only by a corrupted imagination united to a mind of little cultivation : besides, supposing these errors to be the consequence of a false tendency or sentiment, what right have we to attribute to a faculty of the mind the aberrations of a bad heart ? Do we ever ascribe to human reason the moral as well as the religious excesses of rationalists ? That would be very unfair reasoning, though the importance given to the intellect in morals produces lax moral principles, and man has a great propensity to act in practical life in the way which he believes to be most advantageous to himself. We quite agree with Schiller, whose testimony our author quotes, that “ the most terrible scourge is a man abandoned to a furious delirium ;” but he is so when he has engaged his intellect in the service of his passions. After having defined mysticism in this way, Bretschneider declares our age, especially in Germany, to be under the influence of this sombre mysticism, and he attributes its prevalence to the deplorable state of religion in the last century ; for, says he, one excess causes another, and in the intellectual and moral world, as in the physical, too great a tension is always followed by extreme laxity. He expresses his confidence that the balance will be recovered, and that at last we shall find the true medium which wisdom points out and reason perceives. Then will reason resume its empire, and reform, which owed its origin to one of the directions of scepticism, will do justice to all the systems which, founded on realism or idealism, or a combination of the two, such as pantheism, have corrupted the intelligence of modern times ; then, too, reform, destroying the cause of mysticism, will obliterate its

traces, by submitting the whole human life to reason, which will direct the will of man in a regular, invariable manner, and will inflame the heart with a mild, pure, and sincere piety. This eloquent philippic against mysticism, containing as it does a summary of all Bretschneider's philosophical and religious opinions, was received with enthusiasm by vulgar Rationalism, which was at that time pitilessly attacked by the Schellingico-Hegelian party, to which principally the superintendent of Gotha attributed the origin and growth of the monster. But how could so enlightened a writer confound two things so distinct as sentiment and intelligence? and since he considers mysticism as the product of depraved sentiment, could he logically attribute to the intellect an undue excitement of the feelings, which, on the contrary, it prevents by throwing light on the most hidden recesses of the human heart? And is not the intellect, and the intellect alone, the foundation of those systems of philosophy against which he so vigorously declaims? And if Bretschneider glories in being always free from their influence, is he not so by the most happy inconsistency? What, then, is this philosophical Rationalism, as you call it, in which, to avoid the errors of vulgar Rationalism, you give the highest place to the intellect, which you make the mediator between reason and sensibility, thus inverting the ideas of Kant, who, in the same way, made reason pre-eminent? Neither the will nor sentiment is the source of religion; but ideas are the ruling principle of life. Surely this is the language of Hegelianism.\*

But what becomes of the light of revelation in this theory? Bretschneider maintains that its true character consists in the continual development of the intelligence according to the rational laws appointed by the Creator Himself. And if you ask him to particularise this revelation still further, he will answer that he cannot restrict it to any given period; that it is one, constant and universal, the conservative agent of the moral world; hence, he concludes that the substance of revelation cannot be contained in creeds or in any books, but rests entirely in ideas.† Dr. Strauss would not have spoken otherwise; and if this is not an idealistic conclusion, I understand nothing of the value of words. We see, however, from the flattering manner in which Bretschneider speaks of critical Supernaturalism, that he desires to be accounted among its advocates, because he admits that for the direction of life, we need some revelation beside the power which every individual

\* Among the contradictors of this manifesto, we may mention Benda, who answered it in the name of Spinoza, whom Bretschneider accused of being the father of all modern Pantheists, who, in their turn, were the fathers of mysticism.

† *Annals of History and Politics*, published by Pölitz. 2nd Part, for 1829.

possesses, of forming his religious ideas; but as such a revelation has nothing scriptural in its nature, we are compelled to consider it as one of those visionary ideas which the human mind can multiply to any extent unless its Supernaturalism is only that philosophical religion, the mere historical manifestation of the religion of reason. Bretschneider is moreover equally adverse to the philosophical systems of our day and to the Supernaturalism of the Bible and the symbolical books of his church: this he shows in his *Dogmatik*, and in this article, by the unsparing attacks which he makes on them.

Bretschneider in his doctrinal work, though less precise and decided in relation to a mystical, that is, an entirely inspired revelation, still speaks of the law of progress; and human reason, rather than Christian revelation, here shows its title to credence, though the publicist does not entirely overcome the theologian. But evangelical Christianity is far from receiving due consideration. This doctrinal system is distinguished by much method, by clearness of exposition, and literary excellence. To give a just idea of his views, we will quote his own expressions. After speaking in praise of the works of Marheinecke and Schleiermacher, whose views however he does not agree with, he thus continues: "The time is near when Hegelianism and Kantianism will no longer belong to the living world, but only to the history of philosophy. I may say without vanity, that the study of modern philosophy from the time of Kant has been the object of my serious attention, and I frankly confess that I think a familiar knowledge of philosophy an indispensable requisite for a good theologian. If, then, I have been unable to assent to any of the modern systems, even to that of Kant, the reason lies in two principles by which I am guided, and which I believe more certain the more I study philosophy. In the first place, I maintain that the laws of our mind are primitively true, and that consequently every philosophy which dispenses with those laws is deficient in the necessary certainty, and is rather a mental and dialectical quibble than a science of the truth. In the second place, I maintain, as a consequence of the preceding principle, that no philosophy can be true that attacks or wishes to destroy the moral personality of the mind. In such a system I see only the effort of erroneous speculation, or of extravagant sentiment, for a dialectic suicide, which can never take place, because the nature of the conscience, eternally the same, eternally rectifies and contradicts the exaggerations of speculation. Consequently, Hegelianism, which attempts to annihilate the indestructible and immutable consciousness of self, rolls the stone of Sisyphus, endeavours to fill the bottomless vessel of the Danaides, and the time will come, if, indeed, it has not already arrived, when minds will grow

weary of so vain a labour." After this declaration, Bretschneider coolly remarks that he is aware that neither the rationalist nor the self-styled evangelical will agree with him, but adds that he is accustomed to such criticisms, and is too much devoted to study to allow them to trouble him.\* Such, then, is the spirit which guides Bretschneider in his religious instructions; he will have no philosophy *à priori*, no pure and sensible admission of revealed truths, because the natural laws of the human mind are opposed to the facts of revelation. If, then, we take his view—if we repudiate, for example, all necessity for a revelation derived from man's culpability before God, the doctrine on which the whole of Christianity depends, then his Socinian or Philosophical Rationalism, whichever you choose to call it, has free scope; and if we were not aware of his real views, we might easily be deceived by the excellent remarks which he makes respecting the necessity of a revelation relatively to the imperfections of human nature. I think, however, as I am not writing the history of doctrinal theology, but that of the rationalistic tendencies of theologians, I shall better fulfil my task, of giving a complete idea of the tendencies of this system, by recounting the opinions of its author on the connexion between the human sciences and revelation:—"In answer to the question, Has the human reason the right, as the whole of doctrine, to pass a judgment on revelation? and, if so, what judgment?—we may suppose three cases. We may maintain, not only that reason has no right to pass a judgment on revelation, but also that it ought to submit unreservedly to the dictates of revelation. This is strict Supernaturalism, or it belongs to reason to pass a decisive judgment on revelation, of whose possibility, reality, and substance, it can and ought to judge: this is strict Rationalism, or there are only certain rights which are not yet defined; these are the mixed opinions, which are, in turn, named Rationalism, Supernaturalism, and Rationalistic Supernaturalism. The terms Rationalism and Supernaturalism are often employed, not only in relation to the opinion entertained of revelation, but also in relation to belief in its existence or non-existence generally, Supernaturalism being the name given to belief in the reality of an immediate inspiration from God, and Rationalism that applied to the denial of an immediate and supernatural revelation of God to the human reason.† As to the early fathers of the church, they had no theory either respecting revelation or the connexion between revelation and reason; nevertheless, differences of opinion on this subject soon arose between the fathers of Alexandria, of Africa, and

\* *Handbuch der Dogmatik*, &c., vol. i.; ix. of the fourth edition, 1839.

† *Handbuch*, i. 210 221.



of the West. But those who would test the doctrines received in the church by the doctrines of revelation, or would support them on the authority of Jesus as the God-man, commit a *petitio principii*, because in both cases these doctrines belong to a revelation whose relation to reason has yet to be inquired into, and they pre-suppose the divinity of revelation proved, while we are still uncertain whether it is possible and in accordance with reason. The doctrines of our church, at a later period, were the more conformed to the strictness of Luther, because their advocates wished to keep as distinct as possible from the Socinians and Arminians, who brought all the strength of argument against the doctrine of the Trinity, and also wished to use the principles of reason in seeking for the doctrines of the Bible. Some misunderstood passages of Scripture were their grounds of support, and caused them to value the use of reason only for the explanation of Scripture, the formation of systems, and controversial disputes with their opponents: this they termed the *usum organicum instrumentalem* of reason. They rejected, on the contrary, the *usum normalem*, when they wished to consider reason as a principle, as a proof or test of doctrine, and when they considered the relation of reason to revelation as the relation of servant to master. The philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolf restored to reason the right of examining revelation, and decided that revelation could not oppose the established truths of reason. The dispute which ensued caused so much confusion, and was so vehement, especially after the publication of the Theses against the use of reason by Harms, and the commencement of the *Kirchenzeitung* of Berlin, that the study of that period is one of the most disagreeable parts of modern doctrinal science. The confusion of ideas arises principally from the fact, that, after the example of our ancient theologians, the word revelation is often understood to signify the historical Bible, and that those who think they have proved that a revelation should be judged neither by reason nor by scientific experience, have wished to extend this proof to the book of the Bible itself. One of the most common arguments against the use of reason is derived from the multiplicity and diversity of philosophical systems, which show the uncertainty and even inconsistency of the decisions of reason, by which it is made equally incapable of being the principle of an objective and certain religion, and of becoming a principle for judging of revelation. It is to be remarked, that our own feelings and our inward experience tell us so much that is indubitable, that our reason forms ideas which by their inward perfection necessarily decide our opinions, and make all other proof superfluous." Among these ideas Bretschneider classes the religious opinions respecting God, morality, and the other questions which are connected



with these two principal points of knowledge. "Without the power of these ideas, there would be no possibility of a religion for man, still less of a revealed religion; for if man could not discover a God before revelation, he could not tell whether a doctrine coming professedly from the Almighty did really proceed from that divine source; and if, in general, he possessed in himself only a false and insufficient measure for religious truths, he could never know with certainty which of the religions announced to him by revelation was true."\* By means of this theory on the relations of human reason, or rather of the human mind, too often confounded by rationalists with the reason, which is not merely one faculty, but the whole of the faculties of the human being,—by means of this theory Bretschneider unfolds, according to the series of the Lutheran doctrines on God's government and Christology, his ideas of development and purification in religion, so far as the culture of the human mind demands that purification. "The Bible," he says, "is before us, to testify in favour of this system." Jesus, according to him, did not only represent in his life the ideal of a religious man, from which he received the title of the Son of God, and also made children of God all those who resemble him; he also accomplished in his instructions the development of religious ideas. But the form under which he represented them was necessarily suited to the period at which he lived; had it not been so, he would not have been understood, and his sacrifice of himself in bearing witness to the truth would have been in vain. It is now the duty of the church to keep alive the sacred fire, and to propagate the religious truths, of which it has a palpable and visible summary in the person and life of Christ.

But can principles so vague as these revive or quicken the ancient faith? And the church, whose ardour you would see re-kindled, what is it in your system, what place do you assign it in the kingdom of Jesus Christ? With what authority do you invest it, to give it the hope that the sacred fire of which it is the depositary will re-kindle? And what can the Gospel expect in the future from those who, indeed, say to the dead in the faith, Arise, but who have none of those words which formerly had influence over the corpse, and restored it to life? But I repeat with pleasure, that few doctrinal manuals can be read with so much profit by persons unacquainted with the science of theology. The style of the writer is always clear and easy, and this is no slight advantage to the foreign reader. It contains also an ample collection of historical and exegetical materials, which make it, as Twisten says, "an excellent guide in the study of doctrine."†

\* *Handbuch*, vol. i. 221-229.

† *Vorlesungen*, &c., vol. i.

Will the efforts of the illustrious philosopher, whose chair at Berlin was surrounded by men of all ranks and all ages, be more useful, and will Supernaturalism, so long despised, recover at last, by the aid of Schelling's powerful intellect, that influence over men's minds which banishes incredulity, calms irritation, and compels to silence the bravadoes of sophism? The friends of Schelling think that this will be the case; and it has given us pleasure to quote elsewhere, in speaking of the author of the philosophy of truth, as he is called by his admirers, a passage from a letter of one well able to judge of the matter, in which he is considered as the founder of a new era for the regeneration of Christian faith.\* For many years there were outcries throughout Germany against a new doctrine taught by Schelling in his chair at Munich, and it must be confessed that the specimens of it offered by his friends and his opponents did not give a very definite idea of the nature of this doctrine. Perhaps this gave occasion to F. Baader to say that the new philosophy appeared to take pleasure in the memory of its old errors. But the position which Schelling occupies at Berlin, and the publicity of his lectures, affords an opportunity of judging whether he has entirely changed his ground, or whether, as he himself once said in private, "that ground is only more elevated than before;" for the old philosophy of identity openly recognised a God, Sovereign of existence, and therefore the free Creator of nature. All the facts contained in the Bible have an historical foundation, and the ideas proceeding from them correspond perfectly with the doctrine taught in the evangelical churches. Yes; such is the tendency, such are the consequences, of what Schelling denominates, not a new philosophy, but a new phase of the old system, which was only negative, and which, like Aristotle, he terms his *philosophia prima*. It was, therefore, a grave mistake to say that he made the science of the real consist in the science of what we can know; that would have been a continuation of Hegel's errors, and Schelling does not believe that reality is to be constructed by logic.

Reason, he said, is the infinite power of knowing; the object of this knowledge is being. The infinite power of being includes the immediate power of being, the *apeiron* without limits, the matter of Plato; but if it were only this, it would not be actually infinite. It therefore contains also that which cannot pass into being, such as the pure form or activity, and from the union of these two possibilities proceeds a third, which is

\* A. Neander says, "I think that the words of truth so powerfully spoken here (Berlin) by Schelling will have an unheard-of influence, and will commence the new era which we are expecting, notwithstanding the fanaticism of incredulity and of literal orthodoxy."—(*Histoire de la vie et des ouvr. de Spinoza*, p. 288.)

the mind. Finite beings occupy a place inferior to these three infinite powers. But above them, that is to say, above the powers which enjoy the possibility of passing into being, there is one which has being in itself, and which, from the fact that it exists, must necessarily exist ; it is being in all its reality. This power can be only a simple idea in negative philosophy ; but it is recognised as an object of real knowledge by positive philosophy, and is therefore called necessary empirical knowledge. Thus the existence of this being, which has been preceded by no thought, but has been before every idea, is an absolute transcendental existence, which, however, becomes living, only by its faculty of passing into a being not thought of (*unvordenklichen Sein*), whence proceeds the active being which concurs, by this union, to produce the mind. God is personal only in the union of these three powers. This is not the place to discuss this mode of existence in God, nor the manner in which Schelling passes over the difficulties of a temporal creation, which he pretends to have surmounted,—difficulties that do not interfere with his development of the idea of liberty, but which, if examined on metaphysical grounds, would lead us away from our subject. We will proceed at once to the way in which the illustrious philosopher explains the actual condition of humanity, which, according to him, fell from its first state when man, wishing to be like God, the author of something new, came under the power of a principle no longer divine. By this fall the conscience of man was troubled, and the divine powers that have their central point in it were thus separated from each other. They formed three distinct personalities, which will never be re-united until everything shall return to God, and shall realise perfect unity. Until that time, the will of the Father is irritated, therefore it acts only as a power, and the Son, whose task it is to bring the world back to God, is a prey to intense sufferings, and acts only as the servant of the Father. But this renovation can be effected only insensibly, by means of the laws of progress and liberty. Hence the efforts of the people of the earth to return to God, manifested by the different religions that have successively engaged the attention of the human race. Hence the appearance of mythology, Judaism, and Christianity, which have the same end in view, and, therefore, differ not in the principles which are essentially identical, but in the impulse given to the development of them. This impulse is stronger in Christianity only because it comes from without, from the approach of God to man, while in Paganism, and in part in Judaism, all development, being the natural effect of the human will, was necessarily feeble and imperfect.

That God did draw near to man, and did reveal Himself to man, is a fact founded upon history, and testified to by the human conscience.

If revelation is a fact, its philosophy is not merely a doctrine, but the explanation of that fact. It is possible that we may not comprehend the whole of the idea contained in this fact; but the fact existing nevertheless, we cannot say that the idea of it is incomprehensible, except it should, in any way, surpass the grandeur of God, and should not be in accordance with the event that manifested it. Schelling says, with the Bible, the thoughts of the Lord are not our thoughts, nor are his ways our ways; they are as superior to those of man as the heaven is high above the earth. That which may appear to man folly and weakness, is in God true wisdom, true strength. That which is above reason, is not therefore absolutely incredible, for it is above reason only subjectively, and not in the sphere of objectivity.\* That which is a scandal to many in Christianity, namely, that the divine, the great, the infinite, is contained in the finite, the limited, is precisely the thing which constitutes its grandeur, for, by this means, God may be called in the highest degree ingenious nature; art consisting in showing the most sublime idea under a determinate form. Christianity, then, the more ideas that it proposes above human reason, offers the more testimony of its divine truth, and the greater proof that to it alone belongs the power of making known the personality of God. It is, then, true that the *person* of Christ is the essential substance of the Christian faith, and the central point of the revelation, for that person is no other than the second power in God, which the Father entrusted with the task of overcoming matter, but which, after the Creation, was, by the fall of man, deprived of glory and personality. From that time it could act only as a natural power, as the only means of restoring the world to its former position, and thus it annihilated itself, and took the form of a servant. This position of Christ explains his temptation.†

Thus the mediation of Christ consists in his triumph, not over the bad principle, as it has been said to do, but over the non-principle found in the displeasure of God. If Christ had not acted as a mediator, or if he had accepted the proposal of the tempter, the link which joins man to God would have been destroyed for ever, humanity would have taken a direction that would have led it still further away from its first condition. But Christ voluntarily accepted this mediation, which deprived him of the independent being of the Father, and made him a dependent being. At the end of time, the extra-divine being (*aussergöttlich Sein*) will return to the reconciled Father, and then the Father will resume his sovereignty over the whole being. It is not necessary

\* *Schelling's Vorlesungen*, von Frauenstädt, p. 100-103.

† *Ibid.* p. 104-106.



here to state how Schelling connects the pre-existence of Christ with the opening of the fourth Gospel, but we must not omit to say that he does not consider the generation of the Son as eternal, but only as of all time, making a distinction in the eternity between that which preceded thought, and that which preceded time only. It would occupy too much time to show how he connects mythology with Christianity. Mythology is a consequence of the Creation, and differs from Christianity in operating in its development only on the human conscience, which it does naturally, and without divine intervention, while Christianity places humanity in a path that will, in the progress of time, lead to the consummation of its unity with the Deity. Then God will be all in all; the divine persons be no longer independent of each other; and humanity, by its participation in the unity, will take part in His glory, which will be freed from all opposition. Christianity, thus understood, is distinct from pietism, which finds the salvation of the soul in the subjectivity of individuals; and not less distinct from Rationalism, which offers to our belief only an abstract, incomprehensible God, in the idea of whom man cannot find the repose for which he longs.\*

Such, in a few words, is the substance of the new doctrines of Schelling, which were developed by the illustrious professor with that power of words, that even his opponents admit that he possesses. These are

\* *Schelling's Vorlesungen*, von Frauenstädt, p. 110-113-121. *Theologische Jahrbücher*, p. 414-19, 608, 611-14. Marheinecke, *Zur Kritik der Schellingschen Offenbarungs Philosophie*. Berlin, 1843. pp. 7, 13, 22, 43-50, 60. See also Schelling's *Offenbarung-Philosophie*, Drei Briefe. Berlin, 1843; also Michelet's *Entwicklungsgeschichte der n. deutsch. Philosophie*. Berlin, 1843. principally, pp. 183-218. Rosenkranz, who declares that he knows so well this new phase of Schelling's philosophy, says that it is not original, since all in it that is good and permanent, whether in the ingenious explanations of ancient myths, or in the philosophical ideas, is borrowed from Hegel, Creuzer, O. Müller, Solger, and even Rosenkranz himself. Is it not a pity that the professor of Königsberg has not tried his powers in so fine a field, especially when he has made us so well acquainted with the forty years of philosophical labours through which the illustrious Schelling passed before arriving at his positive philosophy? (*Schelling, Vorlesungen, gehalten im Sommer 1842*. Dantzig, 1843.) This we may say, without pretending to approve of the tone taken by Rosenkranz, in a pamphlet on Schelling, addressed to Pierre Leroux, which would have lost none of its excellence, had it been characterised by more modesty—the natural companion of true learning. I say nothing of the publication, *Schelling der Philosoph. in Christo*, which is nothing but rhodomontade. I must, in justice, mention a work from the new school of Hegel, which, notwithstanding its points, cannot fail from its (for once) scientific character to fix the attention of the public. But this monograph of Schelling (*Fr. W. J. von Schelling, ein Beitrag z. Geschichte des Tages*. Leipzig. 1843), published by an anonymous observer of the dispute, was too late for me to make any use of it. I suspect, however, that this is not the first attempt of the anonymous observer.



the means that he employs to call forth all contradictions on to the field of history, and to refute them by the most ingenious explanations of the mythology of all people, and of its connexion with Judaism, in which the Pagan principle still lingered, and with Christianity, whence the non-principle has disappeared only by the fact of the incarnation of the second divine power, which cannot fail to result in the final reconciliation of heaven and earth. Time will soon show us whether this new phase of gnostical philosophy is well received by the theologians who are now studying it in silence, and whether Schelling or Bretschneider may claim the honour of having given a successful turn to modern Supernaturalism.\*

Certainly, if philosophy must at some period be enthroned in the sanctuary instead of theology, we know no system which could be substituted for the ancient faith, better, more quietly, and with less alarm to the people, than this. But the Christian opinions are generally comprehended by the majority in a way so little philosophical, that we may well be astonished at the pretensions of speculative philosophy. It may justly be said that this new philosophy, in which revelation is not comprehended but merely explained, only shows in that its weakness. No system which offers itself as a synthesis can embrace facts as a whole without understanding them, and they cannot be understood unless their nature, relations, and the reason of their existence, are comprehended.

But while philosophers have been busy at Berlin in attempting to connect the future with the past, far greater numbers elsewhere have been engaged in entangling still more the intervening thread, and while science is making these efforts, the people are rushing with the greatest eagerness into the bottomless abysses of indifference and practical materialism. Is this misuse made by the people of all your religious assemblies, which have insensibly become towers of Babel, where you can no longer understand yourselves,—is this systematic disdain which they affect for what you term your religious renovations,—are these things arguments in favour of freedom of discussion, of the removal of all boundaries, of the destruction of all restraining authority? Alas, we must doubt it when we see the laxity of morals increasing in proportion to the laxity of religious life, and religious life declining in proportion to

\* Dr. Hast, a Catholic theologian, who has written in favour of Hermes, has already done homage to the Christian philosophy of the Protestant Schelling, in a pamphlet entitled *Andeutungen über Glauben und Wissen, &c. veranlasst durch Schelling's erste Vorlesung in Berlin*. Münster, 1842. But the *Archiv für theol. Literatur* (5 Heft, p. 407-409), published by the professors of Munich, is far from wishing to encourage this essay.

the food without nutrition that, to use the expression of Claudius, is prepared for it by the learned.

It is now some years since Bretschneider, with praiseworthy zeal, wrote a work that excited some attention, but whose object was forgotten in the midst of more material interests, in which he lamented the indifference of men of all classes to subjects of importance to the prosperity of the church. This indifference, said he, to worship, to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, especially in towns, is becoming so prevalent, that we can anticipate from it only the dissolution of the internal church. And yet, he added, with the external forms of religion, the religious feelings also disappear, and with them are shaken the foundations of the State, which owe their firmness to the sentiments of piety in the hearts of men. Then Bretschneider accuses the English and French Deists of having corrupted Germany; but did not naturalistic Germany respond with enthusiasm to the advances of its neighbours? Did not the irreligious philosophy of the last century bring the remedy in its own excesses? Was not the freedom which it professed preferable to the cunning and perfidious Rationalism, which lends itself to every system, and has always reservations according to the time and circumstances in which it is placed, and the persons with whom it has to do? Bretschneider shows as little sagacity, when, in order to overcome what he calls mysticism, by which, as every one knows, he means the revival of evangelical faith, he proposes to propagate everywhere better ideas of natural religion. He is much more just when he expresses the wish that a better constitution should be given to the church, that there should be more severe laws for the punishment of immorality, and that the magistrates should set an example in the fulfilment of their religious duties.

Another rationalist, the author of esteemed and truly useful works, I mean Professor Winer, of Leipzig, has pointed out the evils in the church, and has in his way endeavoured to remove them. He gave a course of lectures on the subject, in which, with his usual eloquence, he inveighed against the religious indifference of his day, attributing it, on one side, to the invasion of industrial occupations, which engage the attention and affections of the people; and on the other, to the decay of the various elements of the Lutheran worship. He proposed, as the only means of restoring warmth, the improvement of preaching, the reform of the Liturgies, and the practice of religious singing. All these things may be very useful, but can such trivial expedients restore the ancient faith? Not unless the preaching, which is to be improved, be the publication of that Gospel that has, according to the apostle, power to save those who believe in it. A young writer who has analysed Winer's

course, remarks with much justice, that it is singular that these two laments, uttered simultaneously over the decay of Protestant *forms*, proceeded from the land of Saxony, that ancient stronghold of reform, the native country of Luther, where the old right of inquiry was strenuously defended.\* Of the Protestant *forms*.—Here we find a reason for the inutility of these complaints. We must not trouble ourselves about forms, but about realities, and on realities does Rationalism make all its attacks. Of what importance is it to the Gospel, whether men have the titles and authority of superintendents, or whether all ecclesiastical dignities are abolished. But it is of importance that the Gospel should be preached uncorrupted to the ignorant people, and that we should preserve from destruction the precious doctrines which alone can purify and save the soul. Since the first publication of this work, many other voices have been raised to deplore this state of things, and to demand *a better constitution for the church*. On this I have reason to congratulate myself. So that all that my critics have said on this subject will apply equally to C. Haas, who desires the restoration of more unity and more authority in the Protestant church, together with more forms of worship ;† and to Gustav Julius, who laments the decay of religious life, and the inefficacy of the remedies hitherto employed : and who, as a disciple of Hegel, proposes a more intimate union of the objective or the State, with the subjective or the Church, as a means of restoring a healthy state of things.‡ A didactic work on all the questions relating to the existence and forms of the constitution which the church ought to receive has been published by Aug. Petersen. It contains not only learning, but also excellent views on the destination of the two societies, civil and religious, which Rothe wished to unite.§ Who has not read with interest the excellent dissertations on the church, and the reforms to be made in it, under Presbyterian auspices, written by Sack and I. Nitzsch, in the new journal which they are publishing at Bonn.|| And who does not peruse with equal interest the publication of J. Wiggers on the necessity of giving to the interpretation of the Bible an external authority. He has been much blamed for these works ; it is the usual fate of those who depart from the beaten track.¶ But Wiggers, the

\* Adolphe Dupuis, in the *Nouvelle revue germanique*, viii. 172.

† *Die Glaubens-Gegensätze des Protestantismus und Katholicismus im Lichte der heiligen Schrift und Erfahrung*. Stuttgart, 1842.

‡ *Ueber die Hebung des kirchl. Lebens in d. protest. Kirche*. Leipzig, 1842.

§ *Die Idee der christl. Kirche*. Leipzig, 1842.

|| See particularly the introductory article by Prof. Sack, *Die Stellung der evang. Kirche*, &c. ; and that of Nitzsch, *Verständigungen über die christl. Verfassung*, &c., in their *Monatschrift für die evang. Kirche*. 1842. 1st and 2nd part, pp. 65-81.

¶ *Kirchlicher oder rein biblischer Supernaturalismus*. Leipzig, 1842.

professor of Rostock, has well answered the trivial accusation that his system would lead to Catholicism. "I do not consider," said he to his opponents, "the doctrine of the church as anything external and tangible, nor the creed of the church as a Pope upon paper; I desire only a visible church, closely united with the invisible. . . . On the other side, we must not forget that the individual position of every Christian in relation to Christ, depends on his position in relation to the church. So that there always remains this difference between Catholicism and the Confession of Augsburg, that the former regards the visibility of the church as essential, while Lutheranism sees in the church only a community formed by the indissoluble union of the visible with the invisible."\* In the desire of supporting my own reflections by those of several writers advantageously known for their enlightenment on a question of life or death to German Protestantism, I will close this historical essay by some remarks by Twesten, written with his peculiar mildness and fervour, on the deplorable state of religion in Germany.

"Christian opinions seem to have lost their power and activity; the forms of public and domestic life no longer bear their impress as in former days. Worldliness, want of faith and piety, seem to prevail; but perhaps these evils are now more apparent only because they have been hidden under the external veil of received doctrine. Let the evangelical faith be again preached with power, and the evangelical community will be restored sooner than many expect. A foundation does exist, and there is not so much need of a new life as of a new impulse to the life which still remains. It will be like the change of the chrysalis; the old forms are dissolved, and he who dissects the covering finds only matter without a form; nevertheless, it contains the elements of the new organisation, of the being which in a higher state of development than the former, shall come forth from it."

"As to the learned and cultivated classes, we find among them a certain degree of toleration for the Christian faith, and many feel a consideration for it, and a desire to be reconciled to it. It is acknowledged that the path hitherto pursued has not been blessed; enlightenment has not effected the expected good; philosophy has not justified the joyful confidence with which it was hailed, when the foundations of positive faith had been destroyed in many minds; after them fell the general truths of the self-styled natural religion; we feel the calamity of scepticism, which is hidden, it is true, under high-sounding phrases, but which cannot deceive man, when tried by the struggles of life, and leaves him without consolation in the hour of death. We are convinced

\* *Der Gegensatz des kirchlich. u. des rein bibl. Supernaturalismus: ein zweites Wort.* Leipzig, 1843.



that by the side of the numerous edifices raised for instruction, which, without any great expense of talent and originality, have received support and toleration, the ancient doctrine of the church, which yields to no other in good effects and profundity, might honourably maintain its position. He, therefore, who comes forward in its defence need not fear the raillery and enmity of those who think themselves wiser than he, if, indeed, we except some journals and some individuals that represent a period which is past."

Twستن then observes that the barren systems of morality, which they thought to substitute for religion, have, in our day, been quite unsuccessful; that science has taken a more favourable turn; that mere empiricism and materialism have disappeared from the schools of philosophy; that reason and the will are no longer considered as mere expressions of the activity of the mind; that the real organs of religion, the soul and the feelings, are again taken into consideration; that in historical studies a new spirit prevails, and that, in a word, everything presages the return of more religious ideas. He concludes in these words: "The ground is prepared, the seed of living faith must be sown; the fields are ripe for the harvest; may the Lord send forth into them his husbandmen! Why should we not trust in Him, who, in the midst of such difficult circumstances, was able to establish, propagate and preserve Christianity? He whose aid has upheld our evangelical church in so many painful conflicts will not abandon it now. Oh, that He would send us some one who, gifted with the mind and the power of Luther, would be able to change the hearts of men, and to lead back the children to the faith of their fathers; or would that it were His will that the crisis should pass slowly, and that the life of the church should gradually recover its health and ancient strength! Many symptoms of the day indicate a more profound and general movement towards faith. If men once begin to draw from the true fountain, we shall soon see something more decided; indecision will become firmness; what is cold will grow warm; the indifferent will become enthusiastic; and those accessaries which sometimes rendered the good cause suspicious to the thoughtful, and gave to its enemies some grounds to depreciate or reject it,—these accessaries will, I say, be removed." \*

If I did not fear to efface the gentle impressions made on the mind of the reader by the hopes, perhaps too flattering, of a writer who, instead of arriving at speculation by means of the Gospel, passes through the somewhat close atmosphere of speculation to reach the evangelical heights, I would add, that sincere men of all parties are endeavouring to learn the state of the question. In this dispute between Supernatu-

\* Twستن's *Vorlesungen*, vol. i. p. 216-220, second edit.



ralism and Rationalism there are many misunderstandings, especially with several who give only a divided attention to the subject. They must strip the question of certain local accessaries, which give it the falsest colouring. It has been well said by an able critic of Hamburg, that we have not under consideration church interests which are striving to obtain the mastery; it is not in order to destroy religious liberty that individuals oppose the innovators;—no; the whole Christian revelation is struggling against these powerful adversaries, who attack it in the name of Rationalism; it is a renewal of the combat between Paganism and Christianity, and therefore the struggle cannot end until one of the combatants is destroyed.\* But the cessation of the struggle is not necessary to restore peace to the hearts of Christians; they would have as much to fear from a complete triumph as from a defeat. What advantage would they derive from a decisive victory, which is not in the nature of things, and would, if it were possible, only enervate them, or make them proud? Do we not know that it is by struggles, incessant struggles, that truth is purified and maintained? Our highest hope ought to be, that into this vast and rich harvest our Master will send workmen animated by his spirit, so that they may labour for the triumph of truth by means of science united to charity. Then true enlightenment will be spread abroad, and with enlightenment more just ideas of the road which we must follow to attain that which all minds desire—the possession of the truth. Then philosophers and theologians will no longer be divided into two classes; they will cultivate the same ground, because their aim will be identical, and because to reach the same good the best way is to follow the path pursued by those already in possession of the truth which we seek. Then from this identity of philosophical and theological truth will spring the identity of religious faith; then, if the disputes must cease, there will be reason for relaxing our efforts; but we must always grow in knowledge if we do not wish to extinguish the sacred fire of love, which these controversies aid in keeping alive.†

\* *Literarische und krit. Blätter*. Hamburg, 1839. p. 1,028.

† [A useful Summary, showing what Criticism has left uninjured, and generally exhibiting the positive results of theological research, may be found in an English translation of *Einleitung in die Bücher des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, von Ad. Schumann. Berlin, 1848. The translation forms the third volume of *The Library of Christian Literature*: London, Simpkin, Marshall, & Co. See also some excellent remarks on the progress and the present condition of theological learning in regard both to the Old and the New Testament, in the *Jahrbücher der Biblischen Wissenschaft*, von H. Ewald: Erstes Jahrbuch, 1848. Göttingen, 1849.—E.]

## APPENDIX.



# APPENDIX

*By the Translator.*

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## POPULAR MANIFESTATIONS OF RATIONALISM IN GERMANY.

THE rationalistic spirit which pervades the German nation has practically developed itself in two directions, one of which is represented by the *Lichtfreunde*, the other by the German Catholics under Ronge. The *Lichtfreunde* may be called the successors of the New Hegelian school. Their principles were similar, being merely another modification of Rationalism, but their plans of action were different, and their influence was decidedly of a popular nature. Their first meetings were held in Saxony. They petitioned the Government to remove all taxes for religious purposes, and to appropriate the revenues of the most richly-endowed clerical benefices to the uses of popular education. This movement was followed by similar meetings in other parts of Germany. The chief director of these assemblies was Uhlich, pastor of Pömmelte. Another leader of the party was Gustav Adolph Wislicenus, the author of a work entitled *Ob Schrift? ob Geist?* These two men were the leaders and principal writers of the body. The meetings of the *Lichtfreunde* were, after a time, prohibited by the governments of Prussia and Saxony. The last was held on the *Asse*, a woody hill in the duchy of Brunswick. Gustav Adolph Wislicenus was born on the 20th of November 1803, at Battaune, near Eilenburg. He was left an orphan at a very early age, and the care of his education was undertaken by two uncles. He studied theology at Halle, and on leaving that University in 1834, was appointed preacher at Klein-Eichstädt and Grockstädt. He filled this office for seven years; at the end of that time he received an appointment as preacher to a church in Halle. The part which he took in the meetings of the *Lichtfreunde*, drew upon him the enmity of many opponents, who endeavoured to deprive him of his office. The book entitled *Ob Schrift? ob Geist?* was written in answer to the accusations of his enemies, and is one of the principal works belonging to the *Lichtfreunde*. As we have said before, their views seem not to differ materially from those of their rationalistic predecessors. Their mode of spreading them only was different from those formerly employed, being more popular in its nature. We subjoin an extract from Uhlich's *Bekanntnisse* (Leipzig, 1845), which may give some idea of the opinions of the *Lichtfreunde*. "I beg permission to express my creed in a few

simple sentences. These propositions I brought forward at the meeting of *Protestantische Freunde* at Leipzig, in 1842, but they did not appear in the printed report, as it was thought probable that the adoption of a creed might cause dissension: 1. I consider myself, notwithstanding the high position, which, as a man, I occupy in creation, as imperfect and faulty. Something is deficient in me, but the longing for truth, virtue and peace never forsakes me. 2. In seeking to satisfy this longing, I find the best means of doing so in Christianity, the living representation of which I see in its author, Jesus Christ. 3. In him I recognise the most sublime messenger of God to man, the perfect man, the Lord and Master, to whom I can, with the fullest confidence, devote my soul. 4. I believe in the principal facts of his history; but my faith rests particularly on the purity of his life, the truth of his doctrine, and, as the last and surest foundation, on the experience that, in obeying him, I am made blessed. 5. Through Jesus I know that God is my father, whom I endeavour to worship in spirit and in truth, and, particularly, by child-like, unqualified devotion. 6. Through Jesus I have the precept of love as the guide of all my actions. 7. Through him I know that the object of my whole life should be holiness, which, though constantly approaching, I never quite attain. 8. If I have relaxed in my efforts for this object, and am repentant for so doing, Jesus promises me forgiveness, if my heart be changed. 9. He too promises me the gift of the Holy Spirit, as a divine power, which works throughout all Christendom, inspires my soul, and assists me in attaining my object. 10. As the fulfilment of all my efforts, Jesus directs me to a higher kingdom of God, beyond the grave, where shall be completed the judgment and retribution which are commenced here. All these articles are, as may be seen, composed with express reference to Jesus, and so also is the faith which fills my mind. In doctrine, I think of him who gave it for our use, and set us an example in the practice of it. I rejoice that Christianity consists not in doctrine alone, but possesses also the personality of the Saviour, and this I preach to my hearers. But I see very many who hold fast the doctrine of Jesus, without this steadfast meditation on his person, and I am of opinion that they may be not the less good Christians. Jesus says clearly enough, ‘Not all who say unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven.’ It may seem very strange to many of my contemporaries, that a man entertaining this faith should, in the year 1844, have, on that account, fallen under the ban of the Protestant church. A year ago I, too, should have considered it impossible.” Uhlig goes on to explain his connexion with the *Protestantische Freunde*. “Three years ago, an ecclesiastic in Magdeburg, who had openly repudiated the worship of Jesus, was threatened with deposition by his superiors. This aroused my attention. If this is the case, thought I, then is it necessary for all free-thinking ecclesiastics to unite together, partly that they may not be alone when they need advice in difficult circumstances, and partly that they may take counsel together respecting the further development and form of Christianity. These thoughts I communicated to several friends,



and sixteen of us met at Gnadau. This happened July 29, 1841. Thus arose the association of *Protestantische Freunde*, which, on the second meeting at Halle, numbered in its ranks many laymen as well as ecclesiastics. The third meeting was held at Leipzig, the fourth at the conveniently-situated town of Köthen, and the association now has thousands of members, and is regarded with sympathy by many thousands more." . . . "The *Protestantische Freunde* hold two grand yearly meetings at Köthen, at Easter and Michaelmas, and there are district meetings at Halle, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Oschersleben, and Hoym. In the autumn of the same year, a similar association was formed at Königsberg. The two sentiments of the first meeting,—opposition to all powers inimical to free progress, cultivation of the kingdom of God in freedom with united strength,—are still the principles of our efforts."

Johannes Ronge was born at Bischofswalde, in Neisse, October 16, 1813. His father possessed a small property, but his family was large, and Johannes was compelled, in his early childhood, to take a part in the labours of the farm. It was his business to feed the sheep until he arrived at the age of twelve. His early education was therefore little attended to, but the boy was fond of reading, and in the intervals of his duty gave all his time to it. He was naturally quiet and reflective, and having been brought up in a pious manner, early conceived a desire to enter the priesthood. It is a great good in the Catholic system, that it affords the means of instruction to the poor. Ronge, though very poor, was able to obtain an education to fit him for the priesthood. In 1827, he entered a school at Neisse, and, in 1837, a higher one at Breslau. His conduct in both was unexceptionable. He was a quiet and retiring young man, and was little noticed by his fellow-students. About the end of the year 1839, he entered the seminary at Breslau, where he was to complete his preparations for entering the priesthood. But here he found the state of things very different from what he had expected. The teachers, instead of communicating truly religious instruction, spent their time in inculcating obedience to the authority of Rome. The periodical repetition of long prayers wearied and disgusted Ronge. But it still remained his earnest wish to become a preacher, and in another year it was fulfilled. He was appointed chaplain at Grottkau, in 1840; but he was not suffered long to occupy this situation quietly. The Ultramontanists at this time were very active, and awakened great zeal among the adherents of the Romish community. The preachers were closely watched, and any liberality of expression made them objects of suspicion. Before very long, Ronge was considered as a suspicious person by the chapter of the Breslau Cathedral, and he soon came to an open rupture with his enemies. Breslau had been for some months without a bishop, and the ecclesiastical authority was in the hands of a Dr. Ritter, who was universally disliked, as a tyrannical and illiberal man. In 1841, the canon Knauer was chosen bishop by the chapter, and his election was hailed with joy by all parties. But the Pope hesitated to confirm the choice, and delayed so long, that a year passed, and the episcopal chair was still vacant. In these circumstances, suspicions naturally arose of intrigues in

the chapter, and it was thought that the decision was retarded by the influence of Ritter, whose authority would cease as soon as the matter was settled. Ronge, who was in hopes that the new bishop would prove more tolerant than his predecessor, wrote an essay on the subject, which he published in a Saxon newspaper. It was only signed "A Chaplain," but suspicion immediately fell upon Ronge. He was compelled to leave his chaplainship, and all offices in Silesia were closed against him. He left the town of Grottkau, esteemed and regretted by all who knew him, and retired, first to the estate of Count Reichenbach, and afterwards to Laura-hütte, in Upper Silesia. Here he employed himself in education, and remained in retirement until his attention was excited by the events passing in Catholic Germany. It was the exposition of the Holy Coat at Trèves that induced Ronge to come again before the public. He had employed his leisure hours in composing works against the Romish hierarchy, and he took this occasion of publishing that celebrated letter, which was the signal for the German Catholic movement. He was hailed as a new reformer, a second Luther, and speedily was followed by a great number of adherents. Communities were formed for worship, a council was held at Leipzig, and a second at Berlin. In the deliberations of the councils, and as a preacher to the church at Breslau, Ronge took an active part. He found an efficient coadjutor in Czerski, who may be considered as one of the chiefs of the German Catholic church. Little has been heard of this movement lately. This may, perhaps, be owing to the state of politics on the continent, which seems to have engrossed all minds. From a work by Gunther, entitled, *Bibliothek der Bekenntnisschriften der deutsch-katholischen Kirche* (Jena, 1846), we learn that in January 1846, there belonged to this community 310 churches. From the same source we give the confession of faith published by one of these churches, that of Hanau:—

(1) The Holy Scriptures are the sole and only foundation of the Christian faith. The comprehension and interpretation of them is granted to reason, moved and penetrated by the Christian spirit.

(2) As the universal substance of our belief, we give the following Creed:—

"I believe in God the Father, who, through his Almighty word, created the world, and governs it in wisdom, justice, and love.

"I believe in Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, and life eternal. Amen."

(3) We reject the primacy of the Pope, we assert our independence of the hierarchy, and reject before-hand all concessions which may, in any possible way, be made by the hierarchy to bring the free church again under its yoke.

(4) We reject oral confession.

(5) We reject celibacy (compulsory).

(6) We reject the invocation of the saints, the worship of relics and images.

(7) We reject indulgences, appointed fasts, pilgrimages, and all such

church ordinances hitherto established, which can lead only to a spiritless sanctification by works.

(8) We consider it as the task of the church and of individuals to bring the substance of our faith into a living correspondence with the spirit of the age.

(9) We allow entire liberty of conscience, free inquiry, and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, unrestrained by any external authority. We abjure all compulsion, lying, and hypocrisy, for we recognise in different views and interpretations of our doctrine no grounds for condemnation or schism.

(10) We recognise only two sacraments—Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; but we do not wish to compel individual congregations to observe these Christian usages.

(11) Baptism shall be performed on children, on condition of their confirmation in the doctrines of the creed when they arrive at a mature age.

(12) The Lord's Supper is received by the congregation under *both* forms, as appointed by Christ.

(13) We consider marriage as a sacred institution, and observe its consecration by the church; we recognise no restrictions and conditions of it, save those appointed by the State.

(14) We believe and acknowledge that it is the first duty of Christians to show their faith by works of Christian love.

THE END.

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